

CLARITY + *courage*

BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS;
do not be frightened or dismayed,
for the LORD your God is with you
wherever you go. -Joshua 1:9





Beloved,

As I enter this third year of serving as your pastor, **I continue to be so proud and heartened by the church that you have become** and the work you have done against unbelievable challenges.

We have also learned and discerned a great deal. One lesson we've learned is that, at a time when the temptation might be to bring everything back as it was before, **we need to focus on a few critical functions of our church extremely well, and perhaps differently.**

That's why you will see in this booklet a narrative of the places God has collectively called us to focus. We will start by giving our full attention in 2023 to 1) membership growth and engagement; 2) children & youth ministries; and 3) worship. Soon after, we will fold in 4) rekindling a relationship with LSU and 5) a renewed focus on missions.

It has taken a great deal of effort to get to this moment—many hours of time with you as congregation members conducting surveys, focus groups, and deep prayer from our leadership. As you will see from our priorities, goals, and “big risks” for the next three years, 2023 may be only the beginning of an awakening in our church.

God is opening new pathways every day for University UMC to serve our community. We are called to “Courage and Clarity” in faith to make our world better, bolder, and more hopeful. I hope you hear God calling you to commit—through prayer, service, and financial sacrifice—to moving our church forward into the bright future that God surely has in store for us.



With Great Hope,

Katie McKay Simpson

Rev. Katie McKay Simpson
Senior Minister





1

membership growth & engagement

Our Goals

Enhance UUMC's digital and online presence by improving existing platforms and channels while pursuing new avenues for our reach and to grow 100 new attendees* engaged each month by December 31, 2025.

Retain 75% of new members and have them engaged in at least one area of UUMC within 90 days of joining.

Improve engagement of current members—75% of current members attend worship, a small group, or church missions/events at least once a month.

*does not include current members
(engaged and disengaged)



Key Strategies

1. Hire a new Communications Director to lead all marketing and communications efforts with a focus on maximizing the reach, engagement, and impact of UUMC's brand and outreach.

2. Hire a third-party consulting firm that specializes in this area to rebrand our image and develop a new visual identity for UUMC.

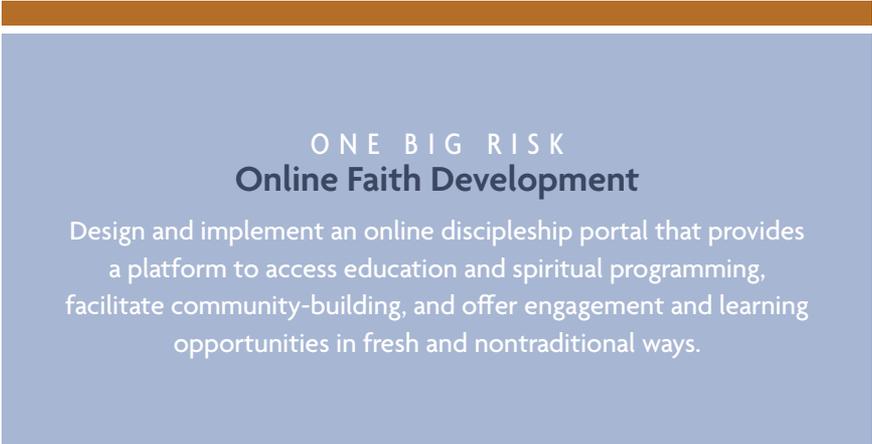
3. Utilize the new branding and strategic communications plans to drastically improve outreach.

4. Utilize existing relationships to actively invite new people to engage in our ministries—UUMC's preschool, afterschool, and VBS programs, online worship attendees, University Terrace families, Wesley Foundation students, and currently disengaged members.

5. Experiment with new recruitment strategies to attract potential new members.

6. Build and implement a "first 90 days" program for new members that educates them on the programs and resources available to match their needs and interests.

7. Improve current membership engagement through better communication of opportunities for deeper connection.



ONE BIG RISK Online Faith Development

Design and implement an online discipleship portal that provides a platform to access education and spiritual programming, facilitate community-building, and offer engagement and learning opportunities in fresh and nontraditional ways.

2

children & youth ministries

Our Goals

Grow UUMC's youth ministry by 30 and the children's ministry by 40 by December 31, 2025.

Improve children and youth programming to enhance engagement, participation, and impact on their spiritual journey. Our goal is for 75% of our children or youth to engage in at least one event per month.

ONE BIG RISK Going Outside the Walls

Create community-based program to meet a community need with our unique resources to impact youth outside of Sunday. Examples could include but would not be limited to: mentoring in schools or Christain musical program for under-resourced youth.



Key Strategies

1. Brand youth and children ministries to revitalize community perception of our offerings (ex.: Firm Foundations Youth Ministry, Catalyst Children's Ministry).

2. Become more present in school events and programs throughout the community, and create a strong transition between our children and youth and young adult ministry programs.

3. Develop a deep understanding of how children and youth want and need to be developed at each stage and align our offerings and programming with these needs.

4. Implement youth ministry programs that empower youth to address community needs..

5. Develop mental health resources and programs designed to help youth navigate the

difficult challenges they are facing in other areas of their lives.

6. Create a mentorship program that engages church members to serve as mentors for children and youth to aid them in their spiritual journey.

7. Better engage parents in their children/youth's spiritual journey by providing educational sessions for parents to partner with us in discipling their children.

8. Partner with other churches to offer joint youth programming and other community organizations that are in need of human/financial resources.

9. Offer an online/mobile app that gives children and youth a practical tool to make discipleship a regular part of their lives.

10. Recruit and retain strong volunteers in a timely and compelling way.

11. Invest in facility improvements to improve the utilization and quality of our children and youth areas.



3

worship



Key Strategies

1. *Reinvigorate the 8:30 a.m. worship service to attract young families.*

2. *Invest in ways to enhance the worship experience by diversifying content, engaging community*

leaders and lay people to speak, utilizing tasteful media options to promote visual learning, and creating resources to help members understand the design and purpose behind worship traditions.

3. *Help visitors and new members feel more welcome and engaged during worship.*

4. *Launch an annual campaign to grow engagement in the music ministry.*

5. *Take the existing offerings (mid-*

Our Goals

Improve in-person and online worship attendance by 25% each year over the next three years.

Expand UUMC's worship offerings in nontraditional ways to reach new and previously disengaged community members.

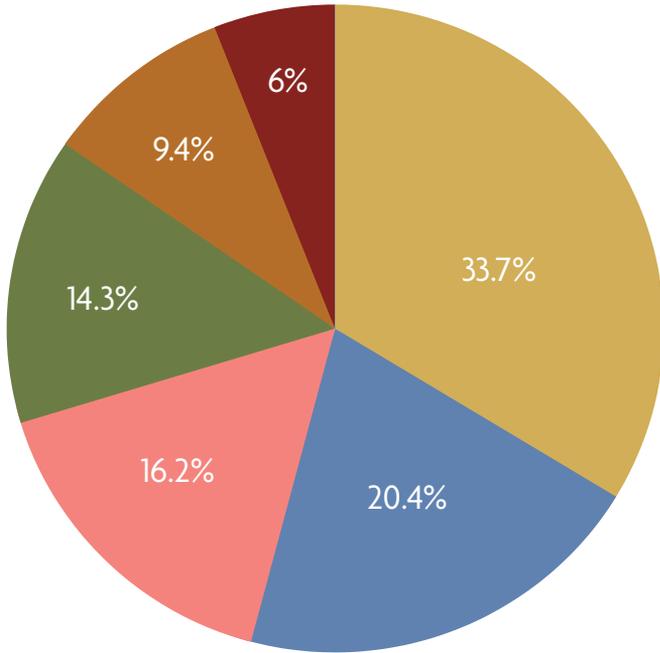
week devotionals, studies, worship live stream) and consider packaging in one digital space, attractive, topically filed, and easily accessible.

6. *Invest in resources and strategies to further expand and improve our live-stream presence and following.*

ONE BIG RISK Incubator for New Micro-Worship Communities

Launch alternative worship community (or communities) off of UUMC campus to experiment with more de-centralized forms of an extended Christian community in new places and at nontraditional times.





PROPOSED 2023 BUDGET

MINISTRY AREA	%	BUDGET
Facilities	33.7%	\$446,405
Administration	20.4%	\$271,133
Discipleship Formation	16.2%	\$214,423
Worship & Music	14.3%	\$190,158
Missions	9.4%	\$124,240
LA Annual Conference	6%	\$79,305
TOTAL	100%	\$1,325,664



Our 2023 budget represents an 8% increase from our 2022 budget, which was \$1,227,073. We also have \$150,000 from the previous year's unrestricted funds to begin our work toward this vision. Your financial support will carry our goals the rest of the way!



we are called *in faith*
TO MAKE OUR WORLD BETTER,
BOLDER, AND MORE HOPEFUL



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