



Summer 2023

Midcoast Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

MISSION *toward* **VISION**

Let's go there together.

Dear friends and members,

The Midcoast UU Fellowship is facing some big decisions this year, including issues of long-term staffing and facilities/location options; however, in order to make any decisions together, the Fellowship needs to know where we're headed. We need a VISION for our congregation's future.

We want to invite all of our members and friends to be a part of this process.

Below is information on our history, where we are today, and why it is so important to take the time to define ourselves going forward (i.e., our vision). We hope you'll make the time to read through our message; but, if you do nothing else right now, please confirm your participation at the [After-service Chat on Sunday, June 11 by emailing your rsvp to vision@uumidcoast.org](#), and/or [register](#) to join us for the initial Tuesday Zoom on June 13 at 7:00 p.m. We want YOUR voice and energy to be present and heard!

• • •

By way of explanation, we know that healthy congregations have both a MISSION and a VISION.

What is a church mission?

In short, the mission is *what you do*—"we exist to..." The mission is focused on the present and what we need to be doing. A church mission is functional and purposeful. It informs and speaks to the head. Mission tends to be 'known', in the sense that it is understood cerebrally. A mission makes today clear and is like a job description, bringing direction to what needs to be done.

We are fortunate to have developed a strong mission statement nearly five years ago, amended and reaffirmed three years ago.

Our mission is to nurture spiritual growth; engage in justice; and build community with respect and compassion.

What is a church vision?

The vision is *where you are heading*: “we will be/see.” Vision is future-oriented and focuses on where we are going. A church vision is an idealistic dream, so it inspires and speaks to the heart. A vision is ‘seen’ with eyes of faith and is ‘felt’, bringing shape to tomorrow. The vision reveals the destination, to be steered and moved towards.

Why are a church mission AND vision both essential?

Without a mission, you will have no day to day focus. Without a vision, you will have no end goal... for a church to be **healthy**, it needs to have both a **clearly defined mission** and **clearly defined vision**.

What makes a church mission and vision different?

The difference between the two: the mission dictates what you exist to do, and the vision shows *what doing that successfully will result in*. anthonyhilder.com

• • •

HISTORY OF MIDCOAST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

Midcoast Unitarian Universalist Fellowship was founded in 1982 by a small group of families, including several retired UU ministers, living in Lincoln County. Members and friends met at the Edgecomb Town Hall on Sunday mornings for the first 20 years. At first, the Fellowship was entirely lay-led and it has remained a Family Church size (~50 people). Lay-led services were always an important part of the Fellowship’s culture, even after ministers were hired, when a tension developed, and has persisted, between lay leadership and ministerial leadership, and questions of who holds what authority.

The first part-time minister was engaged in the early 2000’s and to date, all the professional clergy have been part-time, at most 20 hrs/week. The longest-standing minister was the Rev. Kitsy Winthrop, who served MUUF for about ten years. Three other ministers had very short tenures. In 2013, the Rev. Erika Hewitt

became the half-time contract minister and became the congregation's first and only called minister in 2018.

The period from 2013 to 2020 was marked by an active effort to develop a more spiritually attentive environment with greater attention to Unitarian Universalist identity, engaged training for Worship Associates who would regularly assist with services, an expanded focus on racial and gender justice, and a growing participation of families and youth; however, the existing tension between professional and lay leadership continued, along with an evolving confusion about the structure and impact of "shared ministry." Questions remained about who was empowered to make what decisions, which ultimately resulted in conflict among members of the Board and the minister.

Following the minister's resignation, in the fall of 2020, substantive work has been done to develop processes and policies for healthy communication. The current model of ministry involves a quarter-time minister (Rev. Anne Bancroft) who preaches once/month, attends to pastoral care and Committee efforts, and two preaching ministers, each of whom cover an additional Sunday/month. While this is presently sufficient, it is likely not a long-term strategy.

• • •

The MUUF Vision Planning Team is proposing at least three different opportunities for participation every month for the three summer months. We will have facilitated conversations on each of three Sundays following the service (June 11, July 18, August 22), and a Zoom call the Tuesday following.

1. Facilitated after-service Sunday gatherings in person

- First Sunday chat: June 11
- Second Sunday chat: July 16
- Third Sunday chat: August 20

2. Tuesday zooms 7:00 p.m.

- First zoom: June 13
- Second zoom: July 18
- Third zoom: August 22

3. An invitation to submit ideas in writing

- Feel free to email questions or comments to vision@uumidcoast.org

If you have not already done so, please confirm your participation at the After-service Chat on Sunday, June 11 by emailing your rsvp to vision@uumidcoast.org, and/or [register](#) to join us for the initial Tuesday Zoom on June 13 at 7:00 p.m.

We're looking forward to identifying the Fellowship's vision with you! Thank you.

Rev. Anne Bancroft, Julia Fitz-Randolph, Lindy Gifford

Mission toward Vision Planning Team, with support from the Board of Trustees