

**Faith Communities Today, 2005**  
**UUA Congregations**

**Growth and Decline**  
**(2000-2005)**

**Historic** (Established pre 1900)  
**Mid-size** (150-499 members)  
**UUA Congregations**

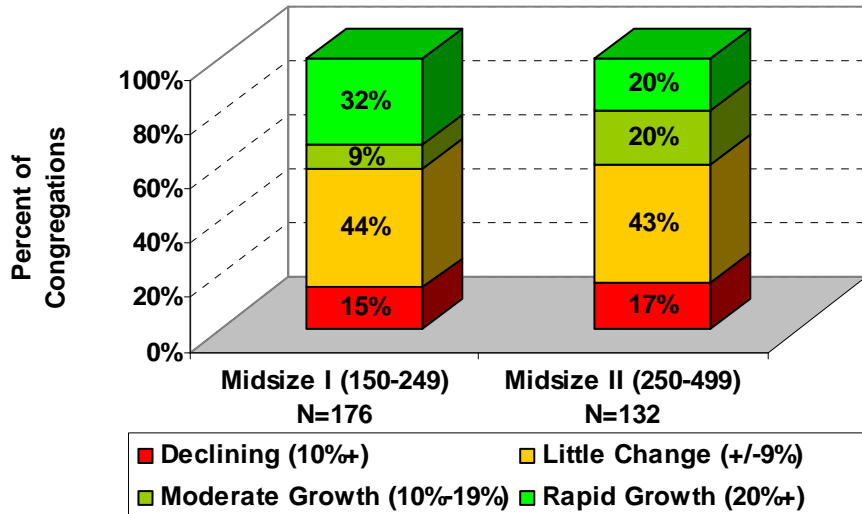
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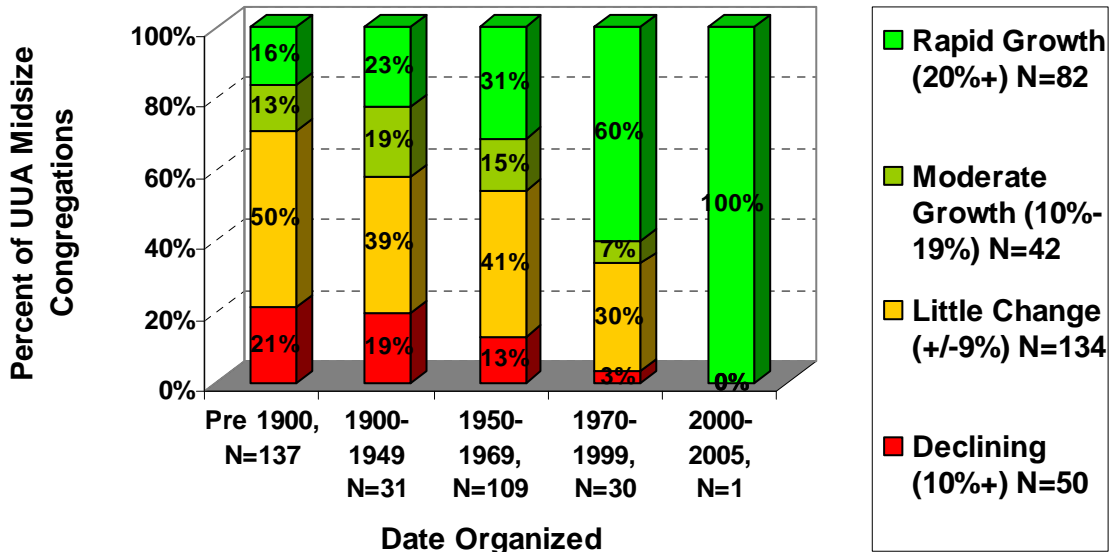
# Growth/Decline in Mid-size UUA Congregations

UUA Mid-size I and II Congregations (FY 05-06): Membership Growth/Decline, 2000-05



Roughly 40% of all Mid-size I and II congregations grew by 10% or more during 2000-2005, but Mid-size I congregations were much more likely to have experienced rapid growth (20% or more) during this time. (Mid-size I: 32%; Mid-size II: 20%)

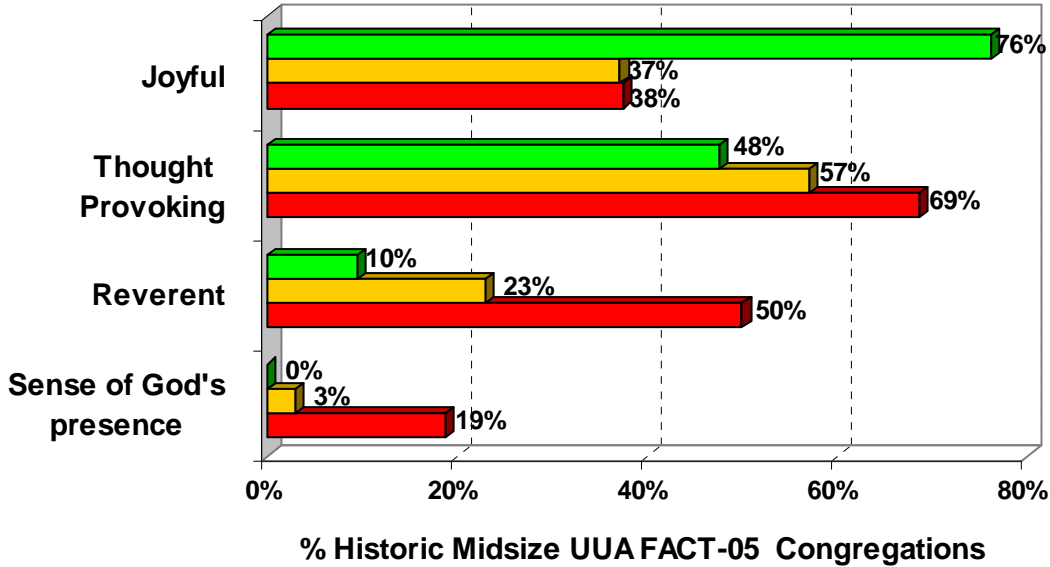
UUA FACT-05 Mid-size Congregations: Date of organization and membership growth/decline (2000-05)



Congregations established before 1900 were the least likely to have grown (29%) and most likely to have declined (22%) in membership during 2000-05. Congregations organized during 1970-1999 were the most likely to have grown (67%) and the least likely to have declined (3%) in membership during 2000-2005. One congregation that was established in 2000 reached 151 members in 05-06.

# UUA FACT-05 Survey Responses from Historic Mid-size UUA Congregations

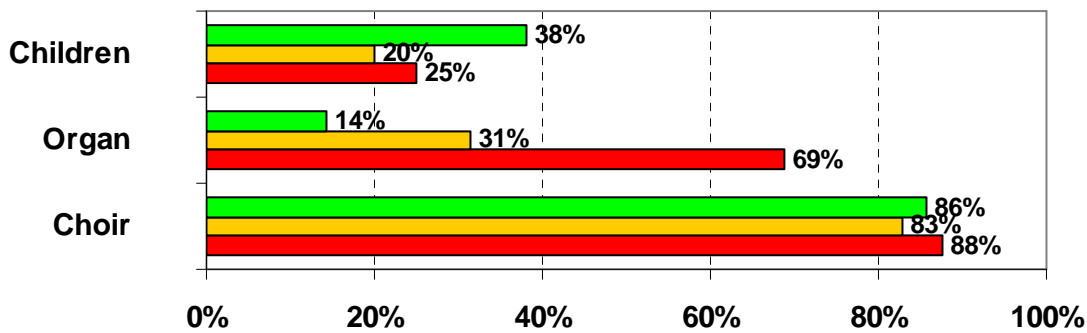
UUA FACT-05 Historic (Pre-1900) Mid-size (150-499) Congregations: This describes our largest worship service very well



■ Declining (10%+) N=16 ■ Little Change (+/-9%) N=35 ■ Growing (10%+) N=21

Growing Historic Mid-size UUA FACT-05 congregations were much more likely than declining congregations to describe their largest worship service as joyful (growing, 76%; declining, 38%), and much less likely to describe them as 'thought provoking' (growing, 48%; declining, 69%), 'reverent' (growing, 10%; declining, 50%), or as having 'a sense of God's presence' (growing, 0%; Declining, 19%)

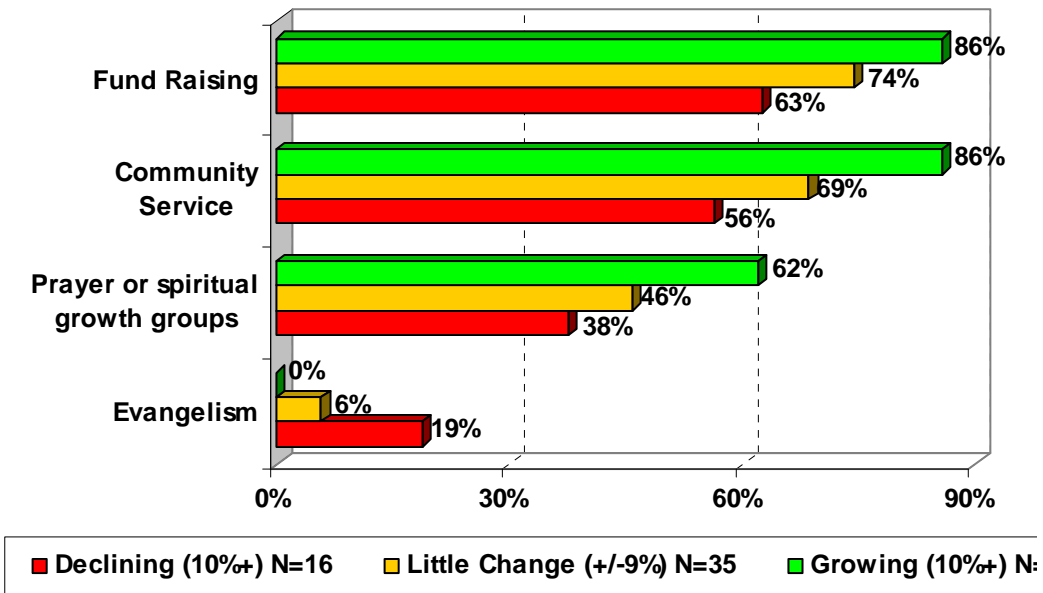
Historic Mid-size Congregations reporting these are "Always" or "Often" part of the largest worship service and membership growth/decline (2000-05)



■ Declining (10%+) N=16 ■ Little Change (+/-9%) N=35 ■ Growing (10%+) N=21

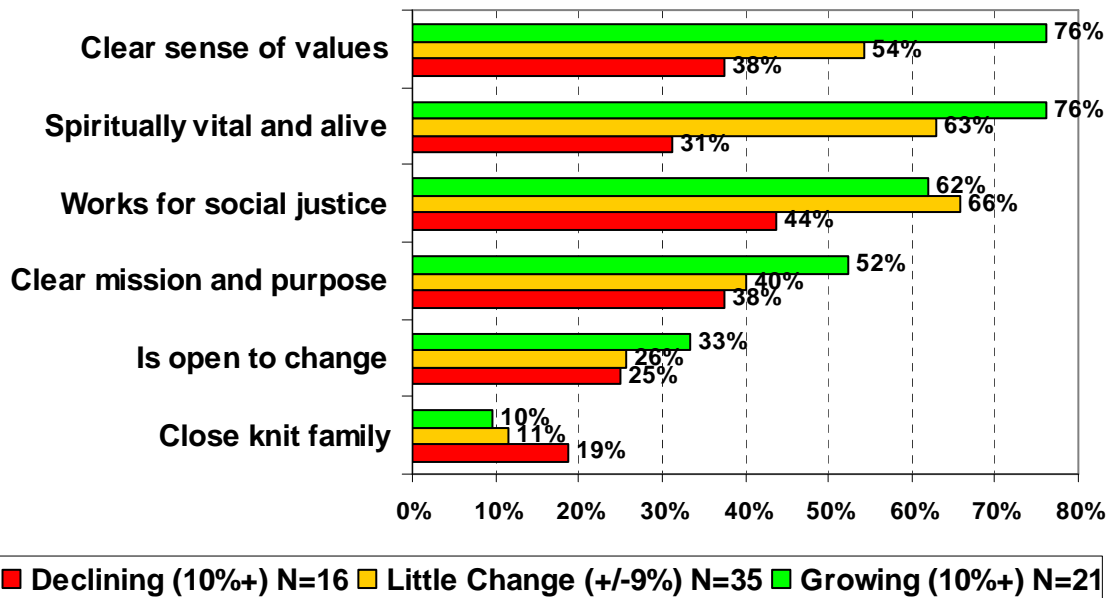
Declining Historic Mid-size congregations were much more likely to 'always' or 'often' have organ music in their largest worship service (Growing, 14%; Declining, 69%), and less likely to include children as participants (Growing, 38%; Declining, 25%)

**UUA FACT-05 Historic Mid-size Congregations: Activities undertaken in last 12 months as a 'key' activity**

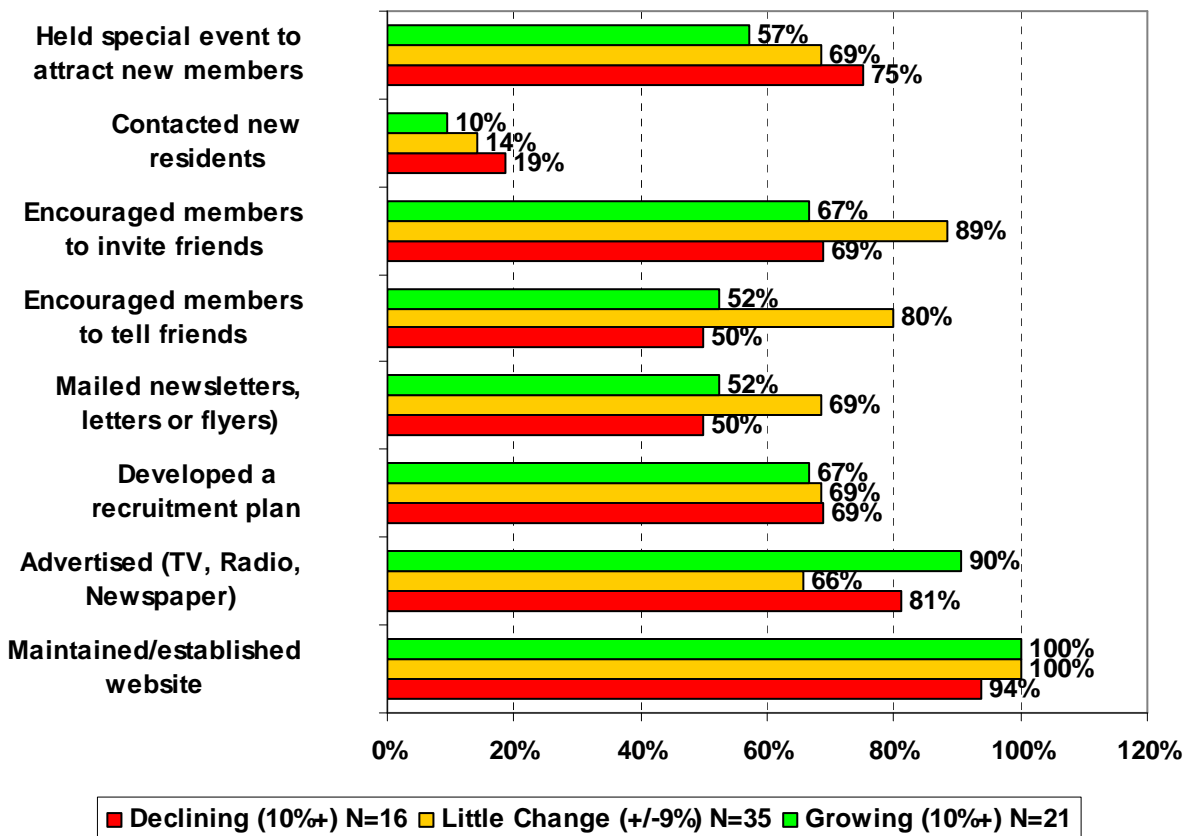


Growing UUA FACT-05 Historic Congregations were the most likely to have undertaken fund raising, community service and prayer or spiritual growth groups as 'key activities' in the previous 12 months. None of the growing historic Mid-size congregations reported undertaking evangelism activities (compared with 19% of declining and 6% of little change historic Mid-size congregations)

**UUA FACT-05 Historic Mid-size Congregations: Strongly agree this describes our congregation**



**UUA FACT-05 Historic (pre-1900) Mid-size (150-499) congregations: Recruitment activities undertaken in last 12 months and membership growth/decline**



**Growing** Historic Mid-size congregations were:

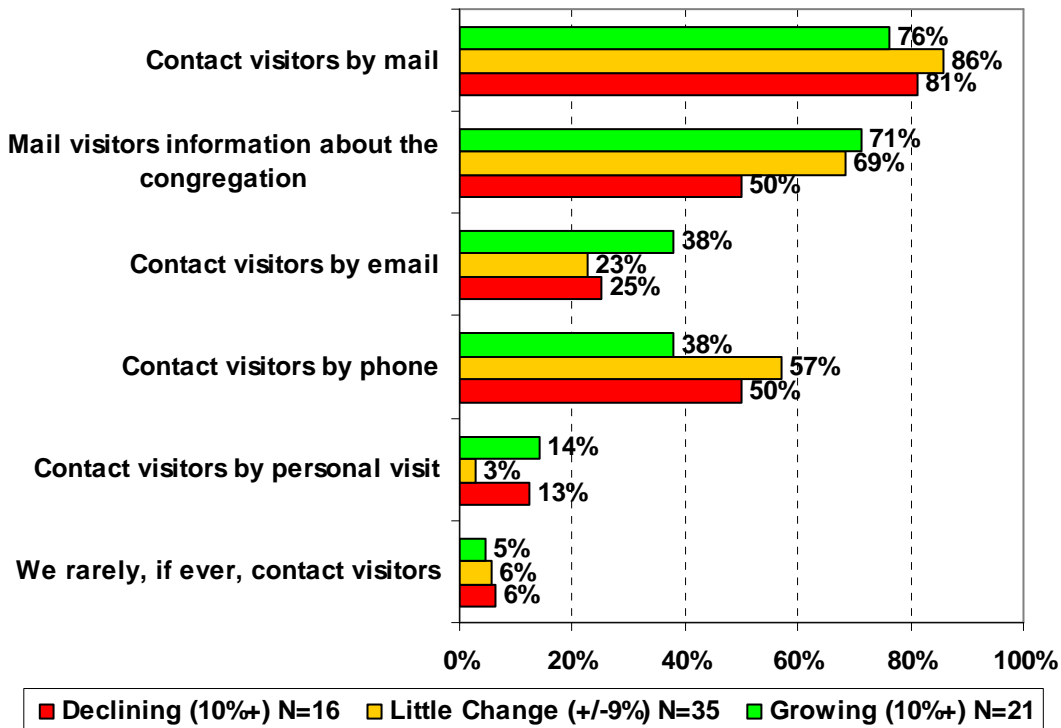
- more likely than others to have advertised on radio, TV or in the newspaper
- the least likely to have held special events to attract new members or to have contacted new residents to the area

**Declining** Historic Mid-size congregations were the more likely than others to have held special events to attract new members or to have contacted new residents.

**Little Change** Historic Mid-size congregations were:

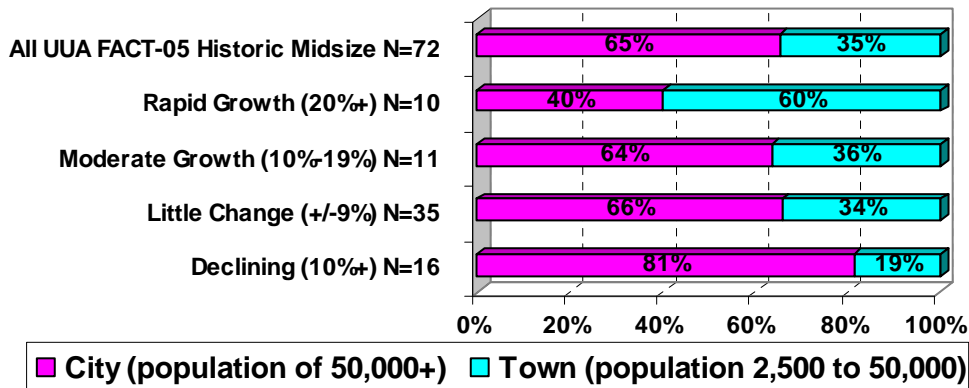
- more likely than others to have mailed or distributed newsletters, letters or flyers and to have encouraged members to tell friends and to invite them to the congregation
- Less likely than others to have advertised on radio, TV, or in the newspaper

**UUA FACT-05 Historic Mid-size Congregations: Follow-up with visitors and congregation growth/decline (2000-05)**



Growing UUA FACT-05 historic Mid-size congregations were more likely than declining ones to mail visitors information about the congregation (Growing, 71%; Declining, 50%) and to contact visitors by email (Growing, 38%; Declining, 25%). Declining UUA FACT-05 historic Mid-size congregations were more likely than growing ones to contact visitors by phone (Declining, 50%; Growing, 38%)

**UUA FACT-05 Historic Mid-size Congregations: Location and congregation growth/decline (2000-05)**



Declining UUA FACT-05 historic congregations were more likely to be located in cities than growing ones. (Declining, 81%; Moderate Growth, 64%; Rapid Growth, 40%)

## UUA FACT-05: Strengths and Challenges

### Moderate Growth (10-19%, 2000-05) Historical (established pre-1900) Mid-size (150-499) UUA FACT-05: current challenges and strengths

<i>Current Challenge or Issue</i>	<i>Greatest Strength</i>
Establishing a stronger financial base in our stewardship effort. Growth.	A wonderful, younger congregation of people in their 30's and 40's plus a number of people in their 20's. Community.
Capital Funding. Balancing a growing membership with relevant social action and spiritual programming.	Community ties, social action, personal and spiritual growth. Participation of the laity across the spectrum of activities.
Developing the personal and financial resources to match the congregation's aspirations. Maintaining and repairing our facilities, and expanding them to accommodate a growing community.	Policies and procedures of congregational polity developed over many years.  Shared ministry.
Expansion to accommodate our growing congregation.  Possibly building a new building (and the need to grow to do so).	Stability, financial resources, vigor. Strong talent pool within the congregation and strong bonds between the regular members. We are the only UU congregation in the area.
The maintenance and development of a sense of community and ownership in our growing congregation. Recruiting and maintaining members, financial support, volunteer leadership.	Sunday morning worship and the Religious Education program. Sunday services, minister, renovated historic bldg on Historic Register, social justice work.
Developing support for people new to the congregation.	Witnessing to the love for all of an inclusive religious way.

### Rapid Growth (20%+, 2000-05) Historical (established pre-1900) Mid-size (150-499) UUA FACT-05: current challenges and strengths

<i>Current Challenge or Issue</i>	<i>Greatest Strength</i>
Find new settled minister; ours retired this year. Handling growth and the transition from Pastoral to Program style of religious community.	Finances, organization, committed congregation. Flexibility, commitment, and a covenant we take with great seriousness.
Planning for growth. We have been squeezed for space and are in the process of purchasing a building to turn into a church. We will have to raise 1 million dollars to purchase and renovate the building.	Friendly congregation. Uplifting message that inspires personal growth.  Its committed, caring, thoughtful people.
Growth and space. Growth transition.	Leadership, committed congregation, growing community. Our congregants.
Getting people to fulfill their Capital Campaign Pledge while keeping up with their annual pledge to the church budget. Rejuvenating Membership Committee to do a good job with new members & friends/visitors; Adult Programming people will attend	Our Minister, successful Capital Campaign; feeling of family or belonging among members; strong board leadership.

**Rapid Growth (20%+, 2000-05) Historical (established pre-1900) Mid-size (150-499) UUA FACT-05: current challenges and strengths continued**

Growth, expansion and preservation	Our ministry and our congregation. We also enjoy our rich history.
Tithing and volunteerism and promoting outside our walls	Passion and good message and great programming to offer and quality worship.
Increase pledge base to staff for growth, appropriately fund programs, and reduce budgeted fundraising.	We're a caring and welcoming congregation.

**Declining (10%+, 2000-05) Historical (established pre-1900) Mid-size (150-499) UUA FACT-05: current challenges and strengths**

<i>Current Challenge or Issue</i>	<i>Greatest Strength</i>
Future professional leadership -reforming vision and mission. To what extent it genuinely wishes to grow in numbers, and what, if any, action it is willing to take in support of that desire.	Tenacity.
Membership growth and retention. The congregation has a long range plan for growth. By the year 2010, ASC expects to have 500 members.	Close knit, supportive 'extended family' for perhaps half of the active membership. Diversity in many ways - racial, age, economic, gender preference and ability to work together for commonly held objectives.
Develop a capital fund program to correct deferred maintenance. The retirement of the Senior Minister after 27 years and the seeking of a new one. Growing our Congregation with young families.....we are an older group.	Gathered in love and service for justice and peace. Involvement in church activities on a daily basis. Its identity as a liberal bastion in the community.
The challenge to understand the need for growth in depth of mission and number of active members and total members. We have been growing in numbers and vitality. The leaders are adapting to change faster than some members. It is important to clarify where we are going and to keep our eye on where we are going, so as not to be distracted.	Lay leadership and growing our RE program. Long-time faithful membership; also a challenge in that they would like things to 'stay the same,' whatever that has come to mean over the last 40 years...
Raising the pledge & assimilating newcomers. Developing a mission and vision and deciding whether we want to actively grow the congregation. Bringing in new blood so the same folks don't keep ending up doing most of the work. Better integrating new members - better leadership development.	Openness to new possibilities. Religious Education for children. Strong lay leaders, strong religious education and youth programming.
Restoration of historically and architecturally significant building. Growing our membership.	Strong ministry from both ministers. High level of trust, consensus, working together as community. Strong sense of its tradition. Supporting one another, welcoming visitors.
Capital Campaign. Name change process/question.	We are a group of bright, engaged, spiritually-oriented workers for wholeness and justice.

## UUA FACT-05: Data Tables

### All UUA Mid-size Congregations (150-499), FY 05-06: Membership Growth/Decline (2000-05)

	Mid-size I (150-249) N=176	Mid-size II (250-499) N=132	All UUA Mid-size (150-499) N=308
Declining (10%+)	27	23	50
Little Change (+/-9%)	77	57	134
Moderate Growth (10%-19%)	16	26	42
Rapid Growth (20%+)	56	26	82
<b>All UUA Mid-size (150-499) N=308</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>308</b>

### UUA Mid-size Congregations (150-499), FY 05-06: Date of Organization and Membership Growth/Decline (2000-05)

	Pre 1900, N=137	1900-1949 N=31	1950-1969, N=109	1970-1999, N=30	2000-2005, N=1	All UUA Mid-size Congregations, N=308
Declining (10%+) N=50	29	6	14	1		50
Little Change (+/-9%) N=134	68	12	45	9		134
Moderate Growth (10%-19%) N=42	18	6	16	2		42
Rapid Growth (20%+) N=82	22	7	34	18	1	82
All UUA Mid-size Congregations	137	31	109	30	1	308

### UUA FACT-05 Historic (Pre-1900) Mid-size (150-499) Congregations: This describes our largest worship service very well

	Declining (10%+) N=16	Little Change (+/-9%) N=35	Growing (10%+) N=21	All UUA FACT-05 Historic Mid-size N=72
Reverent	8	8	2	18
Informal		1		1
Sense of God's presence	3	1		4
Joyful	6	13	16	35
Liturgical	2	5	2	9
Exciting	2	4	2	8
Inspiring	7	12	9	28
Thought Provoking	11	20	10	41

**Historic Mid-size Congregations reporting these are "Always" or "Often" part of the largest worship service and membership growth/decline (2000-05)**

	Declining (10%+) N=16	Little Change (+/-9%) N=35	Growing (10%+) N=21	All UUA FACT-05 Historic Mid-size N=72
Choir	14	29	18	61
Organ	11	11	3	25
Guitar		2	1	3
Drums		1	1	2
Projector		1		1
Sacrament	1			1
Children	4	7	8	19

**UUA FACT-05 Historic Mid-size Congregations: Activities undertaken in last 12 months as a 'key' activity**

	Declining (10%+) N=16	Little Change (+/-9%) N=35	Growing (10%+) N=21	All UUA FACT-05 Historic Mid-size N=72
Religious Education	16	35	21	72
Prayer	6	16	13	35
Study	12	25	15	52
Clubs	13	22	15	50
Support Groups	4	1	3	8
Evangelism	3	2		5
Community Service	9	24	18	51
Choirs	14	28	18	60
Fund Raising	10	26	18	54

**UUA FACT-05 Historic (pre-1900) Mid-size (150-499) congregations: Recruitment activities undertaken in last 12 months and membership growth/decline**

	Declining (10%+) N=16	Little Change (+/-9%) N=35	Moderate Growth (10%-19%) N=11	Rapid Growth (20%+) N=10	All UUA FACT-05 Historic Mid- size N=72
Advertised (TV, Radio, Newspaper)	13	23	10	9	55
Mailed/distributed (Newsletters, Letters, Flyers)	8	24	7	4	43
Maintained/established website	15	35	11	10	71
Developed a recruitment plan	11	24	8	6	49
Contact new residents	3	5	2		10
Encouraged members to tell friends	8	28	4	7	47
Encouraged members to invite friends	11	31	6	8	56
Special Event to attract new members	12	24	6	6	48

**UUA FACT-05 Historic Mid-size Congregations: Strongly agree this describes our congregation**

	Declining (10%+) N=16	Little Change (+/-9%) N=35	Moderate Growth (10%-19%) N=11	Rapid Growth (20%+) N=10	All UUA FACT-05 Historic Mid-size N=72
Close knit family	3	4	1	1	9
Spiritually vital and alive	5	22	8	8	43
Clear mission and purpose	6	14	6	5	31
Works for social justice	7	23	9	4	43
Is willing to change	4	9	4	3	20
Clear sense of values	6	19	9	7	41
Wants more members	12	22	8	7	49

**UUA FACT-05 Historic Mid-size Congregations: Follow-up with visitors and congregation growth/decline (2000-05)**

	Declining (10%+) N=16	Little Change (+/- 9%) N=35	Moderate Growth (10%-19%) N=11	Rapid Growth (20%+) N=10	All UUA FACT-05 Historic Mid- size N=72
We rarely, if ever, contact visitors	1	2		1	4
Contact visitors by mail	13	30	9	7	59
Contact visitors by phone	8	20	3	5	36
Contact visitors by email	4	8	4	4	20
Contact visitors by personal visit	2	1	2	1	6
Mail visitors information about the congregation	8	24	8	7	47

**UUA FACT-05 Historic Mid-size Congregations: Location and congregation growth/decline (2000-05)**

	Declining (10%+) N=16	Little Change (+/- 9%) N=35	Moderate Growth (10%- 19%) N=11	Rapid Growth (20%+) N=10	All UUA FACT- 05 Historic Mid- size N=72
City(population of 50,000+)	13	23	7	4	47
Town (population 2,500 to 50,000)	3	12	4	6	25
All UUA FACT-05 Historic Mid-size N=72	16	35	11	10	72