



Building Beloved Community

UUCF 2020

Study Group I Report

January 2017



UUCF Planning for Growth Study Group 1
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Introduction

The UUCF Planning for Growth Study Group (hereafter SG) was appointed by the UUCF Board of Trustees (BoT) in October 2016. Its members were John Menke, Karen Reilly, Dick Roblin (Co-Chair), Stan Schlepp, Tara Scibelli and Jeff Wilson (Co-Chair). In a Concept Paper from the Board to the SG (Appendix A), the SG was charged

“to gather data [about UUCF’s future growth], analyze it, and present a written report to the BoT recommending ways UUCF can continue to accommodate our congregation as we continue to grow.”

In addition, the BoT requested that the SG *“project how and when facilities might have to be expanded in the future as our congregation continues to grow. It [the SG] will specifically consider how changes in operating procedures, scheduling, and staffing may delay the need for facilities expansion.”*

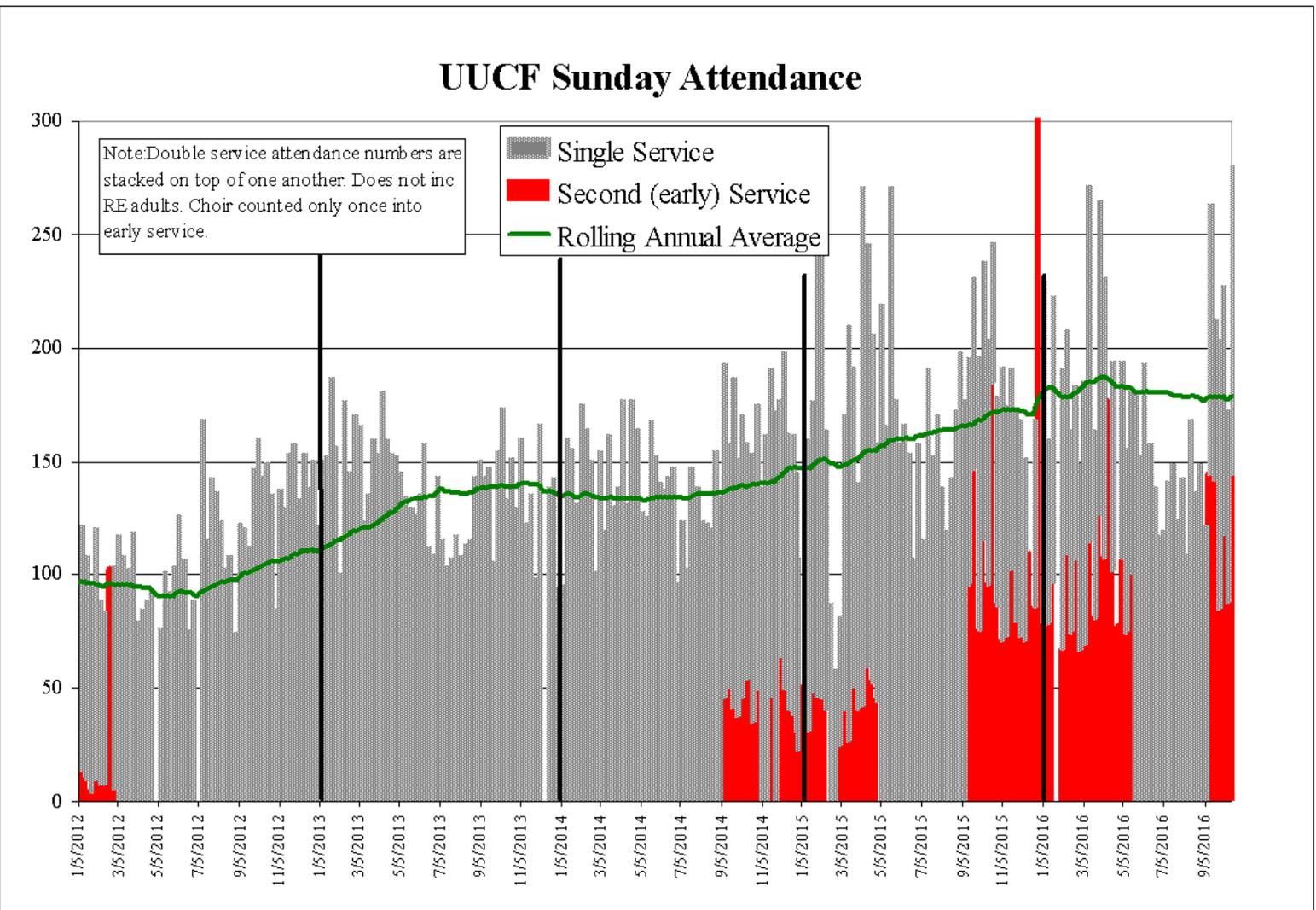
For this Report, the SG decided to focus primarily on several elements in UUCF congregational life. They are 1) Seating in the Sanctuary for Sunday services, 2) Religious Education Program Space, 3) Parking Lot Spaces and 4) Storage Space for all UUCF programs.

I. Seating in the Sanctuary for Sunday Services - Current Use and Future Projections

The Sanctuary room is the primary worship space for UUCF Sunday morning services. It is limited to 202 seats by Fire Marshal regulation. Now that the UUCF Adult Choir has grown to 40+ members, there remain about 160 seats in the Sanctuary for each of the 9:30AM and 11:30AM services on the two Sundays a month when this Choir sings. So, during the fall, winter and spring (F/W/S) season, the audience seating capacity in the Sanctuary varies between about 320 (on Choir Sundays) and 404 (on non-Choir Sundays). [See also the seating capacity discussion in the attached document “6 Reasons Your Sanctuary is Smaller Than You Think”, particularly the paragraph about the ‘80% Rule’. This “rule” is called the “80% full” mark in this Report (see “A Comment on the ‘80% Rule’” below)]. Since the Choir does not sing in the summer, 202 seats are available for the 10:30AM services in the summer.

For several reasons, the number of adults in UUCF worship services on Sunday mornings has been counted and recorded. A graph of the data collected from 2012 to 2016 is shown in Figure 1. The gray bars indicate the number of adults attending a single Sunday service (in the summer or F/W/S before September 2014, when we resumed two Sunday services). The red bars indicate the number of adults attending the 9:30AM service, once we resumed two Sunday services. The total height of the stacked red and gray bars indicates the total number of adults attending both services. The green line on Figure 1 is the rolling 52-week average attendance. It should be noted that, during the time covered by the data in Figure 1, the Adult Choir was counted only once and their number is included in the 9:30AM service data. This approach was chosen because, in the past, the data was collected for the purpose of reporting to UUA the total number of different individuals attending our services. Starting in November 2016, the number of Choir members attending each of the 9:30 and 11:30 services is being recorded

Figure 1: UUCF Sanctuary Attendance, 2012-2016



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separately for the UUCF purpose of determining when the seating limit in the Sanctuary is reached.

The data in Figure 1 illustrate several points. First, the total attendance is quite variable from Sunday to Sunday. Second, the average attendance for the 10:30AM service in the summer is around 140 persons and is lower than the combined attendance at the two services during the F/W/S season. Possible reasons for lower total attendance in the summer include people being on vacation, the Adult Choir (about 40 people) not singing, only one service, no Religious Education (RE) program classes or Children’s Choir for children, etc. Finally, the rolling 52-week average attendance line shows that average attendance at Sunday services has been gradually increasing over the last four years since Rev. Gregg became our Minister in July 2012.

Figure 2 shows the Sunday by Sunday Sanctuary attendance for the 2016 summer season. The calculated average number of attendees was 143. The data from the summer of 2015 were similar, with an average attendance of 140. With 202 seats available in the Sanctuary for summer services, audiences of this size fill the Sanctuary to about 71% of capacity. On three Sundays in the summer of 2016, Sanctuary attendance was above the “80% full” mark, but none of these Sunday services required additional seating in the narthex. UUCF currently has the ability to accommodate additional people in the Sanctuary at the summer Sunday service.

A Comment on the “80% Rule”

In the attached article, *6 Reasons Your Sanctuary is Smaller Than You Think*, the “80% Rule” is stated in extreme form.

“The 80% Rule is this: once you have reached 80% full – you’re full. ... Beyond 80% your visitors do not have any real choice of where they want to sit. Beyond 80% your visitors will not come back”.

We agree that when the UUCF Sanctuary seats are 80% occupied, a late arriving visitor or Member will have increasing difficulty finding a seat, especially for a small group that would like to sit together. We think the “80% full” mark is the start of a difficult to measure visitor/Member perception that the Sanctuary is “full” and has no space for them. However, rather than consider this as an inflexible Rule, in this Report we have called it the “80% full” mark, and used it to indicate when increasing Sanctuary attendance will start to have possible negative impacts on visitor perceptions of UUCF’s willingness to welcome them.

The data in Figure 3 show the Sunday and Christmas Eve attendance in the F/W/S season from September 2015 to May 2016. Dates with a yellow highlight were Sundays when the Adult Choir sang at both services. To better approximate the total number of Sanctuary seats occupied at the 11:30AM services, 40 Choir members have been added to the counted attendance. This makes it possible to directly compare attendance at the 9:30 and 11:30AM services. Once again, note the considerable variation in the Sunday to Sunday Sanctuary attendance.

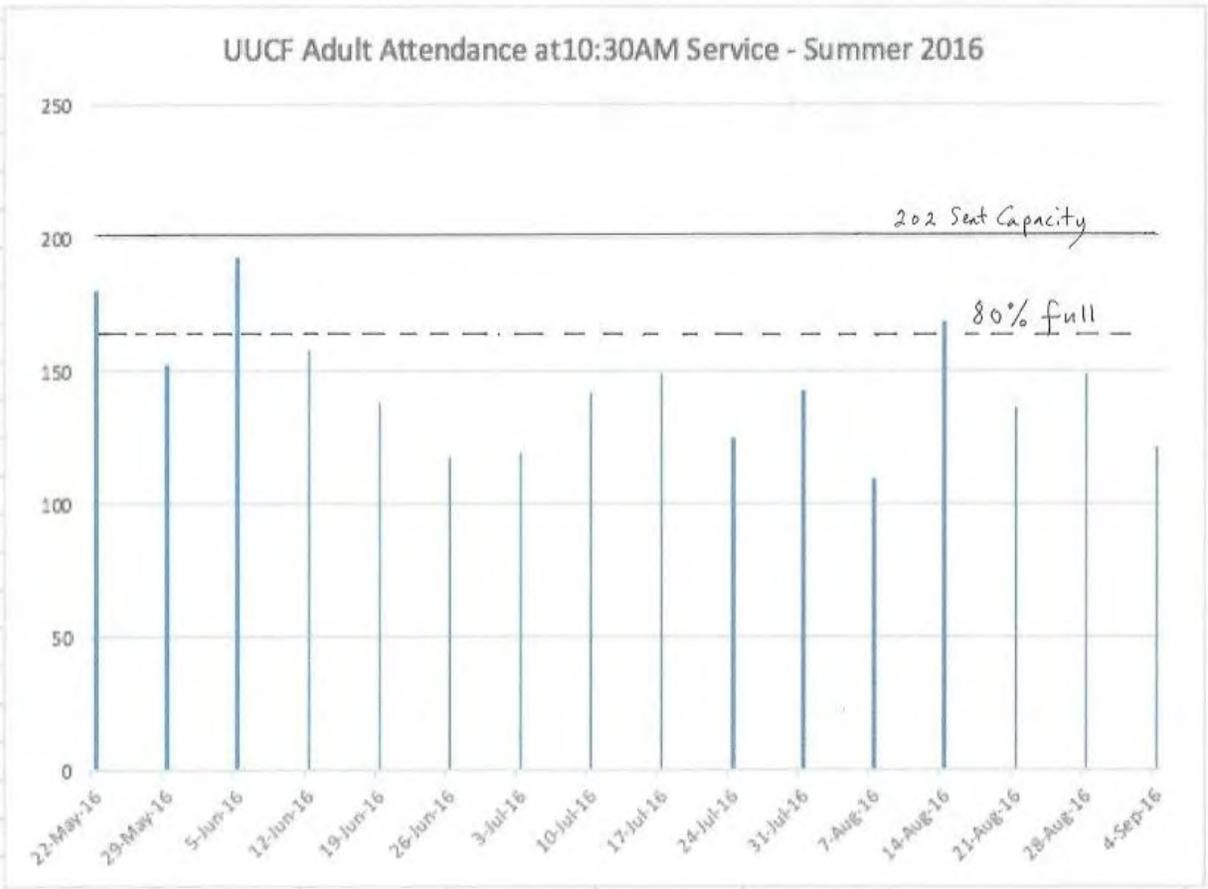
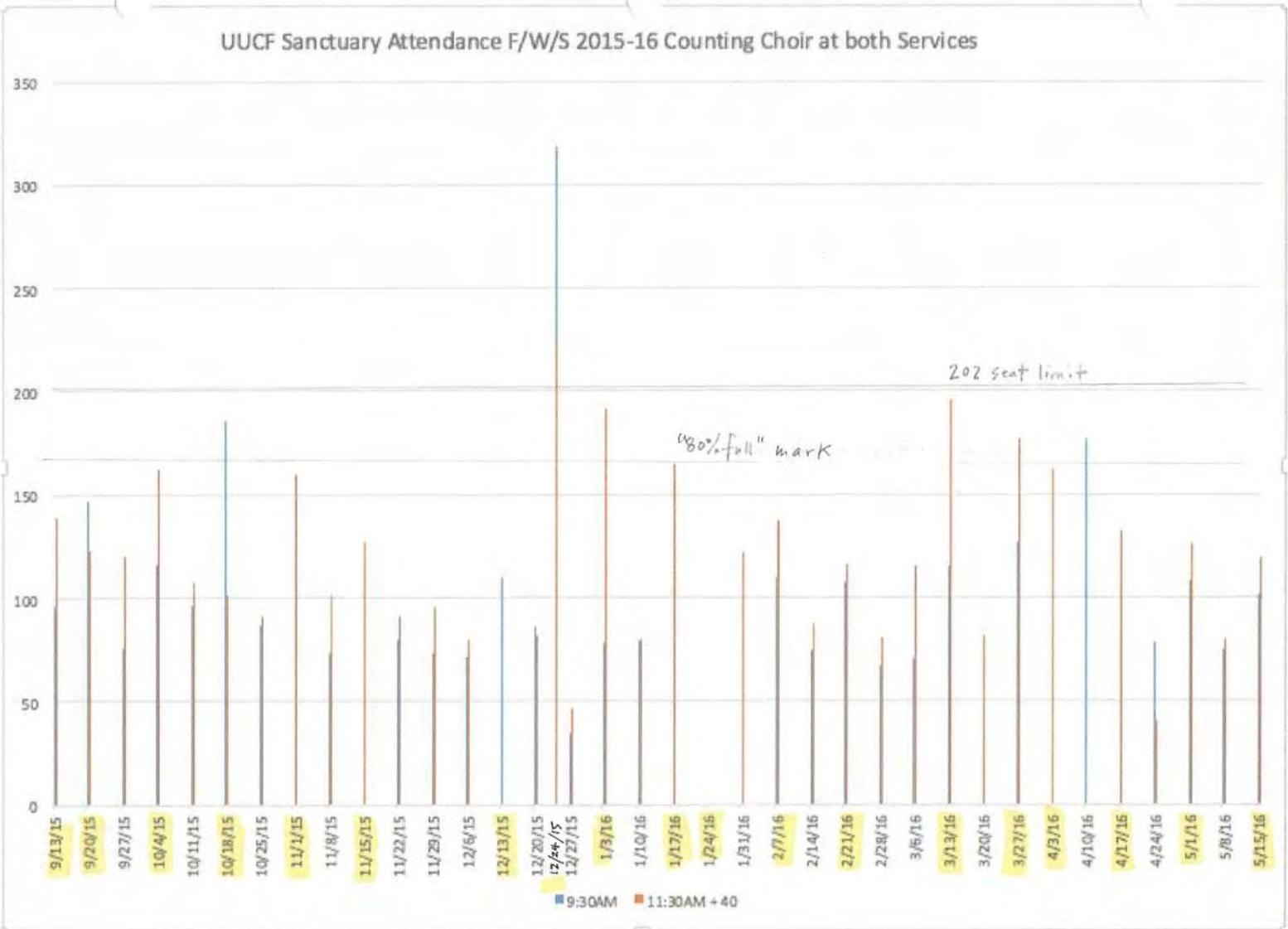


Figure 2:

Figure 3:



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The data in Figure 3 indicate that the Sanctuary attendance exceeded the “80% full” mark on 5 Sundays. Only for the two Christmas Eve services was overflow seating in the narthex required. The average attendance for this season at the 9:30AM service was 101 persons. The average attendance for this season at the 11:30AM service (after including an estimated 40 Choir members) was 119. Even on Choir Sundays, UUCF currently has the ability to accommodate additional people in the Sanctuary at both of the F/W/S season services.

Children and Children’s Choir Impact on Sanctuary Seating

On many Sundays the children start out seated in the Sanctuary. They come forward to listen to the Story for All Ages and then leave to go to Arts and Exploration. The single, or small numbers of empty seats they leave behind are then available to seat additional people. These vacated seats may not be conveniently located for additional seating.

In November 2016, the UUCF Children’s Choir (CC) started singing the Introit once a month at both the 9:30 and 11:30AM services. At the start of the service, 20-25 children sat in the “Choir Loft” (seats usually occupied by the Adult Choir), sang the Introit, listened to the Story for All Ages and then left the Sanctuary to go to Arts and Exploration. Their numbers are being counted and recorded each time they sing, but they are not counted in the adult attendance as they depart about 15 minutes after the start of the service. The empty seats that they leave behind are a block of seats in the Choir Loft that may be used to seat late-arriving attendees.

The variability of attendance from Sunday to Sunday creates a policy issue around deciding when to take action(s) in response to increasing attendance. For example, should action(s) be taken when the Sunday Sanctuary attendance regularly exceeds the “80% full” mark, or should we wait until the attendance regularly creates an overflow into the narthex? The data in this Study Group Report illustrate the problem and we have provided some suggestions for short to medium term responses. We believe that we still have some time before the Sanctuary seating problem becomes acute. In the future, however, UUCF 2020 follow-on Growth Study Groups and ultimately the UUCF Board of Trustees will have to develop policies to deal with it on a more permanent basis.

Estimating Future Growth

We have made estimates of the growth of the number of Members and Friends in the congregation through the year 2020 (see Figure 4 and the discussion of assumptions used in making these estimates below). We estimated that the net number of new Members (after reducing the number of Members by those who are changed from Member to Friend each year and those Members who move away) would increase at 20 per year. We estimated that the number of UUCF Friends would increase by 15 per year. We included a onetime increase of 20 Friends in 2017 in accordance with a UUA recommendation that we count all parents of children in the RE Program as Friends. We assume that the estimated increase in the number of Members and Friends between now and 2020 means that more people will be attending Sunday services and will require seating in the Sanctuary.

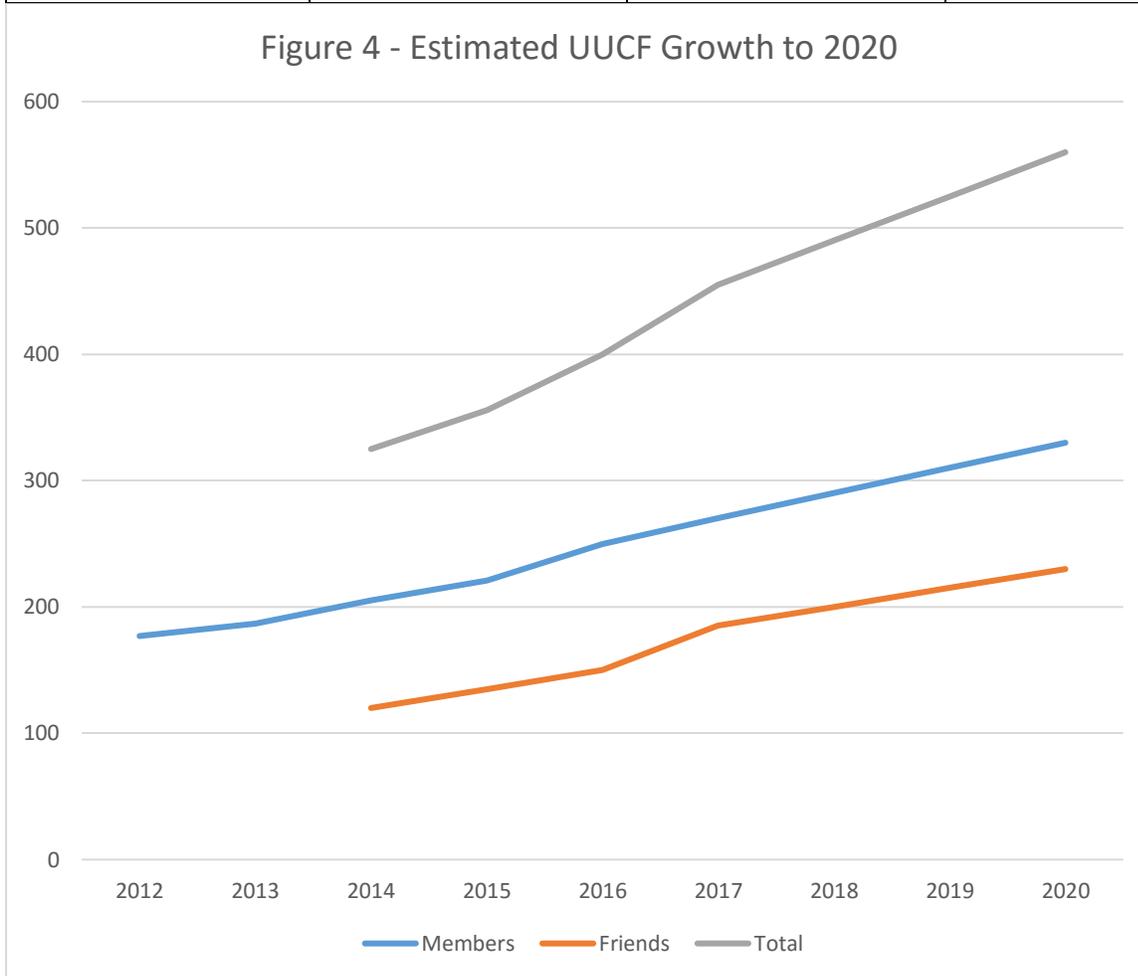
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Figure 4: UUCF Growth Chart, 2012-2016, and estimated to 2020

Members net increase at 20/year after 2016

Friends net increase at 15 /year after 2016

Year	Members (Date)	Friends	Total
2012	177 (2/1/13)	not recorded	
2013	187 (2/1/14)	not recorded	
2014	205 (2/1/15)	120	325
2015	221 (2/1/16)	135	356
2016	250	150	400
2017	270	185	455
2018	290	200	490
2019	310	215	525
2020	330	230	560



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Assumptions Made in Estimating Future Growth Shown in Figure 4

1. The number of Members from 2012 to 2015 is taken from the annual reports submitted to UUA and counted only Voting Members.¹
2. The number of Members for 2016 is the current best estimate, but won't be officially established until late January 2017 when UUCF makes its annual calculation for the UUA Report.
3. The number of Members for 2017 to 2020 is estimated starting from the 2016 estimate and adding 20 new Members each year. That estimate comes from holding 4-5 New Member classes each year with each class having up to 12 participants, minus the number of Members changing status to Friend (recently 10-15 each year) and the number of Members moving away (this number varies and is unpredictable).
4. The determination of who is a UUCF Friend is partly subjective, as it is based on perceptions by Membership Ministers of the person's involvement in UUCF. It includes spouses of UUCF Members who infrequently participate in UUCF events. It is partly objective as well, based on whether the person in question has made a Pledge or contributed time, talent or treasure consistently. The Friend category also includes some who were previously Voting Members, but whose status was changed because they did not make a financial contribution of record in the calendar year. Some of these people are in the process of leaving UUCF, but it sometimes takes a year or more for them to drop out completely. Thus, the number of Friends shown on the Chart, and its increase of 15 Friends per year, is at best an educated "guesstimate."
5. We have a large list of people who are classed as Visitors. They have visited UUCF, and we have their contact information. Although their numbers are not shown on the Chart or used in our calculations, they have an impact on our physical facilities requirements, for example, in the need for parking spaces.

Other Assumptions That Could Influence Estimated Future Growth at UUCF

- A. Rev. Carl Gregg remains the Minister at UUCF. Conversations with many members have established that they highly value Rev. Gregg's sermons and ministry and that he is one of the major factors that causes them to continue to come to UUCF. Should he decide to leave UUCF before 2020, it would doubtless slow the growth rate.
- B. The Music Program under the direction of Deb Int Veldt is emerging as a second strong reason why people come to and enjoy UUCF Sunday services. Should she and our accompanist Nick decide to leave UUCF before 2020 it would probably slow the growth rate.
- C. The Membership Ministers have recently decided to offer the UUCF 101 Pathways to Membership class a fifth time in 2016 to accommodate those who wish to become Members. Should this continue in future years and be well attended, it could increase the Member growth rate shown in Figure 4.

¹ The UUA reported number of UUCF Members is as of February 1 of the designated year and is calculated after our annual adjustment of Members and Friends in late January. In addition, UUA now recommends that we count all parents of children in RE as Friends. We implemented this recommendation in January 2017 and have included it in Figure 4.

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D. Should any of our physical facilities (available seats in the Sanctuary, overcrowding in the RE classrooms, number of parking spaces, etc.) become severely inadequate to support continued growth of UUCF, it could decrease the future growth rate.

Estimating the Future Demand for Sanctuary Seating

How might we estimate the demand for Sunday worship service seating in the future? To illustrate one approach, we calculated the ratio of the average summer season Sunday adult attendance (Figure 2) to the total number of Members and Friends over the last two years (Figure 4). When we used that ratio to estimate the rate of increase in the summer season Sunday morning attendance through the year 2020, we obtained the data shown in Table 1.

Table 1 – Estimated Future Summer Season Sanctuary Spaces Needed

Year	Ratio (Average Attendance/total M + F)	Estimated <u>Average</u> Number of Sanctuary Seats Needed
2015	0.39 (140/325)	140 (average actual attendance)
2016	0.36 (143/400)	143 (average actual attendance)
2017	0.375 (average of above)	171 (exceeds “80% full” mark)
2018	0.375	184
2019	0.375	197
2020	0.375	210 (exceeds Sanctuary seating capacity)

We conclude that the number of single service Sanctuary seats during the summer season could become insufficient before the end of 2020. However, there are multiple uncertainties and assumptions built into this calculation, and changes in any one of them could affect the conclusion above. For that reason, we have not gone beyond this example calculation for this report. A different approach to this estimation, which focused on the rate of increase in Sanctuary attendance, gave about the same result; namely that the estimated attendance begins to exceed the number of single service Sanctuary seats around 2019-2020. We recommend that the Sanctuary attendance continue to be recorded each week. The best indicator that we are approaching the Sanctuary seating limits will be the number of times each season that we need to set up overflow seating in the narthex.

Suggestions for Managing the Sanctuary Seating Issue Before New Construction

Summer Season

Sanctuary Seating-1. Because there is currently only one Sunday service during the summer season, one solution to this issue would be to add a second summer season service, perhaps on Sunday evening.

F/W/S Season

Sanctuary Seating-2. Have children taken directly to RE and eliminate the “Story for All Ages” portion in both services. This would free up space at the start of the service and make it easier for ushers to seat adults, including visitors. (See also Suggestion RE-1 below).

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Sanctuary Seating-3. Establish overflow seating in another area of UUCF. If the space selected is too bright, purchase darkening shades for all the windows so a screen can be more easily viewed. Purchase the necessary sound system(s) as well.

Sanctuary Seating-4. Offer live-streaming of at least one service that can be viewed at home.

The Chapel

The Chapel is a second space used for worship by UUCF groups including the Buddhist Fellowship, Christian services, and Earth Centered Spirituality (Pagan) services. Groups up to about 50 can be seated comfortably in this room. Currently, the Chapel is used for Children’s Choir Rehearsals during the 9:30-10:30AM hour on 3 out of 4 Sundays, and the Parenting Forum meeting one Sunday per month. It is also used for the UU Buddhist Fellowship beginning at 11:00AM on two Sundays each month. None of these groups is currently large enough to exceed the seating capacity of the Chapel.

II. Religious Education(RE) Program Spaces

The RE Program uses Rooms 120, 123, 124 and 125 for classes on Sunday mornings. The children attending RE are grouped into four groups, Grades PreK/K/1; 2/3/4; 5/6/7/8; and 9-12. Each RE group uses one of the four available rooms for their class. Children attending the 9:30AM Service or the 11:30AM Service leave the Sanctuary after the Children’s Story to participate in a program called “Arts and Exploration” for the remainder of that hour.

The RE Director has been tracking total RE registration data for several years. The number registered for 2014-15 was 66, for 2015-16 it was 63, and for 2016-17 it was 78 attending. Since September 2016 she has also been recording attendance numbers for each of the four groups separately. This can be the most useful data in determining when a class group has grown too large to be accommodated in one classroom. The data for the fall of 2016 is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. UUCF RE Attendance by Class, Fall/Winter 2016, [(CC)=Children’s Choir singing]

Date	PreK/K/1st	Grades 2/3/4	Grades 5-8	Grades 9-12
Room #/Capacity	Room 120/11	Room 123/12	Room 124/13	Room 125/15
9/11/16	16	9	9	3
9/18/16	12	6	8	1
9/25/16	12	7	6	2
10/2/16	13	7	7	2
10/16/16	10	9	9	7
10/30/16	15	11	9	5
11/6/16	12	8	8	6
11/13/16 (CC)	12 -27 at early A&E	12	9	5
11/20/16	17	12	10	5
11/27/16	12	6	10	2

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12/4/16	12	9	8	3
12/11/16	No class	RE Pageant		
12/18/16	11	9	8	6
12/25/16	No class	Service at 10:30		

The number of children in the PreK/K/1st class increased noticeably in September 2016 compared to previous years. If additional children in this age group desire admission to the class, some adjustment will have to be made. An appealing solution might be to transfer some of the first graders into the 2/3/4 class. However, moving too many of the 1st graders into the 2/3/4 class will quickly make that class overcrowded as well.

To teach our children effectively in the RE Program, the classes need good teachers and adequate space and materials. There are multiple points of view about how much space per pupil is needed to effectively teach students of differing ages. We suggest that UUCF use the ft²/pupil standards recommended by Wayne Clark (see Appendix C). If we did so, then for Room 120 where the PreK/K/1st class meets, that 358 ft² room would be suited for a maximum of 11 pupils. According to the data in Table 2, the attendance for the PreK/K/1st class has exceeded 11 students on 10 of the 12 class Sundays in the fall of 2016.

As it is currently operating, the RE Program has run out of space in the PreK/K/1st classroom on Sunday mornings.

Future Projections

There are currently about 70 children/youth registered for the 2016 RE Program from about 43 families. The start of the new UUCF Children’s Choir in November 2016 appears to be drawing additional children into the RE program. Informal observations during Sunday services this fall suggest that young families are inviting their friends (other young families) to join them at UUCF. Attendance at Rev. Carl’s Parenting Forum has grown to about 25 people twice a month. Although we have not made any numerical estimates of future growth in RE attendance, it seems likely that there will be some increase in attendance over the next four years.

Suggestions for Managing The RE Growth Issue

RE growth is an issue now, so we have chosen to provide below a variety of suggestions that could be implemented in the short term. Note that several of these ideas will require prioritization decisions by the Board of Trustees and the Minister regarding how space is allocated among “competing” groups at UUCF. Additionally, a few of our suggestions address staffing issues created by RE growth and/or that arise as a result of employing some of the solutions below.

Religious Education-1. Subdivide RE classes further and use Room 113 for RE. This would require other Sunday groups to shorten or reschedule their meetings in these rooms to another day and/or time and/or location and would also require the recruitment of additional classroom teachers.

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Religious Education -2. Have the children go directly to RE at the start of both services and eliminate Story for All Ages. Return to conducting RE (instead of having Arts and Exploration time) during each Sunday service rather than in between services, thus providing two opportunities for RE and splitting up the total number of children into two groups rather than one.

Religious Education -3. Recruit more RE volunteer parent assistants to help a main RE teacher (who is responsible for the lesson plan) in each class. Consider setting an expectation that parents whose children have participated in RE for a year or more should volunteer 2-3 times/year to assist the main teacher. These volunteers could greet parents (while the teacher sets up), help register new children, take attendance, and serve as general helpers to the teacher.

Religious Education -4. Offer RE for teens during second service only, ask responsible teens to help in younger children's RE classes during the first service (those who can come to UUCF early).

Religious Education -5. To retain adult RE teachers who with a shorter morning (2+ hours rather than 3+) might be willing to conduct two Sunday RE sessions, change UUCF Sunday as follows. This is just one possible suggestion for altering Sunday service and other activity times and is not meant to be viewed as the only or even the best configuration possible to achieve this goal.

- 9:30-10:15 – first service (Shorter service possible with SFAA elimination, other minor adjustments)
- 10:15-10:45 – break
- 10:45-11:30 – second service (See note above.)
- 11:30-12:30 – Other activities that used to be conducted during the middle hour. This would also free up the Chapel for overflow for the regular services.

Circle of Life Preschool Program

The Circle of Life Cooperative (CLC) Preschool is one of the Religious Education programs of UUCF. It is a half-day preschool program operating M-F mornings during the school year and operates under a Letter of Compliance issued by the Maryland State Department of Education Office of Child Care. The CLC uses room 119 and the playground for daily operations with some storage and office space in room 120. The CLC holds two separate classes with a maximum of 10 students registered in each due to State regulation of teacher-student ratios. These classes run M-Tu-W and Th-F. There are no changes planned for Circle of Life operations.

III. Parking Lot Spaces

Currently UUCF has 112 officially recognized parking spaces. We use 126 parking spaces (112 official + 2 Handicap (HC) Spaces + 12 on the right side of the driveway =126).

We could increase the number of spaces as follows. From the lower, mail box end of the

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driveway, upward to the right turn at the top of the drive there is a 198-foot-long run that currently has 9 in-line spaces that are 22 feet long and 8 feet wide. By adding an 8-foot-wide stone apron to the right of the existing in-line spaces, we could create an area that could contain a total of 22 new 9-foot-wide nose-in parallel parking spaces. To add the stone apron, there are several plantings that would require relocation or destruction. The 3 in-line spaces at the top of the hill would be left as is. The fourth space is now marked "Do not park here" in order to provide access to the rear of the building.

There are additional parking spaces (perhaps 7 in all) currently being created by removing diseased trees. If we did all this, we would eventually have the 112 official, 2 HC, 7 tree & shrub, 4 nearest the trash enclosure, 22 proposed in the 198-foot-long section =147. These changes in our site plan would need county planning and zoning approval. The removal of the plants and repainting the lines can be done by UUCF. A truck loaded with 22 tons of $\frac{3}{4}$ " stone, delivered and properly spread would cost \$500. The stone would also be used to mark the tree and shrub areas as a parking space. Paint would be about \$100. Replacing trees and shrubs removed for the apron would add additional cost.

When overflow is expected (for example, at the Christmas eve services), UUCF should provide 2 persons in the parking lot directing and ensuring well placed vehicles and appropriate spacing. One person would be stationed at the top of the driveway directing where the vehicles should go to park. Overflow parking on Elmer Derr Road is to be avoided whenever possible as the speed of cars along that road and people walking to their cars parked there can create unsafe conditions.

Suggestions for Managing this Issue

Parking Spaces-1. Perform further analysis to determine whether there are clustered groups of people who might use a shuttle service to UUCF if one could be provided for low-cost. For instance, several members live in the Homewood Community north of Frederick. In addition to the added benefit of not having to drive themselves, a shuttle service would free up parking if those members come in one vehicle.

Parking Spaces -2. Perform further analysis to determine whether a continuous (interval TBD) shuttle service from the commuter parking lot on Mt. Zion Road to UUCF would be cost-effective and used by enough people.

Parking Spaces -3. In overflow situations like Christmas Eve services, park cars on the grassy area beyond the glass doors in the Narthex.

Parking Spaces -4. Again for overflow situations like Christmas Eve services, contract with a bus company to run a shuttle bus from the parking areas at the intersection of Elmer Derr and Mt. Zion roads.

IV. Storage Space for all UUCF Programs

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Several of the major UUCF program leaders and committee chairs have been interviewed with regard to current space and storage area use. Data from these interviews has been attached as Appendix B. Needs for additional storage space are evident, and most programs interviewed estimate that they can create only small amounts of additional storage by more efficiently organizing their current storage space.

As shown on the Diagram of Space and Storage Use in Appendix B, the RE program is a major user of both room space and storage space. Because of the wide diversity of materials used in the RE program, adequate storage space is a current problem. It is currently alleviated only by storing many items in the RE Director's office. Particularly needed is additional storage space for large items and lockable storage cabinets for program materials.

The Facilities Manager is actively considering constructing additional space in one of the storage sheds outside the UUCF building. He has also expanded storage for Facilities by moving files currently stored in the basement to the top of the storage cabinets in Room 115. The Social Events group is looking to create more storage space in the kitchen. On site storage for items used in events like the Auction dinner is currently not adequate.

Suggestions for Managing this Issue

Storage Space-1. That the Board of Trustees and the Minister designate some group or individual at UUCF with the authority, responsibility, and annual budget to respond positively to requests for additional storage space from UUCF program elements.

Overall Suggestions [Ways we can continue to accommodate growth]

Overall Suggestion-1. That the BoT recruit a follow-on planning group (UUCF 2020 Planning for Growth Study Group II) that assimilates the data in this Report, and continues to collect and analyze UUCF Sanctuary and RE Program Sunday attendance data. That either Study Group II or a subsequent 2020 Planning Group recommend specific action(s) to manage increasing UUCF growth. As soon as specific action(s) have been recommended, that they be widely publicized and persons in the congregation be given time and appropriate venues to comment on them.

Overall Suggestion--2. That, in light of his considerable impact on the future growth of UUCF, the BoT hold discussions with Rev. Carl Gregg to obtain as much clarity as possible about the projected length of his tenure as UUCF Minister.

Overall Suggestion--3. That the follow-on planning group complete interviews of UUCF program space and storage needs like those in Appendix B. Study Group 1 was limited in the interviews it could conduct by the three-month time line for completing our Report to the Board of Trustees.

Responses to specific questions posed by the Board of Trustees in their Concept Paper.

1. How might adding a second minister and additional services delay the need for a larger

facility?

- Adding a second/associate minister if deemed desirable by the Board of Trustees should be done in close consultation with Rev. Gregg. However, no office space currently exists for this type of additional staff member and the SG thinks a second/associate minister would definitely need such a space.
- Conducting additional Sunday or other weekday services would further dilute the effect of community within the congregation by creating division beyond what already exists as a result of UUCF's having two Sunday services. Each person's prime opportunity to interact with others occurs during this regular weekly time and further congregational separation should be avoided if possible. However, despite this important drawback, the SG acknowledges that having more services is one way to delay the need for initiating building construction to accommodate UUCF's space needs.
- Additional regular services would put further strain on musical resources.

2. Would the use of cameras and video screens enable us to accommodate more people in the building beyond the Sanctuary for large services by establishing overflow room(s) with sound and video of the main service? How would this impact other's use of other areas (i.e., rental income, etc.)?

- The Chapel would provide another fifty or so seats for overflow beyond what can be added in the narthex and is the largest next available space.- Other room options for overflow are possible too, however, and further details regarding these possible spaces, as well as the technology and equipment (e.g., cameras, video screens, window blinds/screens) needed to make several rooms workable for overflow are outlined below. Potential room use conflicts and other considerations are also partially noted.
- Any room designated for overflow that is currently being used for another purpose during Sunday service times will necessitate that the group using that space change some combination of its activity's day, time, and/or location.
- Furthermore, no space changes for Sanctuary overflow or RE growth should be considered in isolation, as decisions in favor of one use will most likely impact possible space for the other.

Further Details on Overflow Seating Areas:

- **Narthex:** Current use of the Narthex on Sundays includes fair trade sales, hospitality table(s), and occasionally set-up of other tables for specific UUCF information and event registration. The Narthex has been effectively used in the past for overflow from the Sanctuary for special services such as Christmas Eve. Chairs are put in rows and columns (allowing access to emergency exits). Approximately 70 additional seats can be accommodated if there are no hospitality or other tables in the Narthex. The Narthex is also the only space under consideration that has speakers already connected to the Sanctuary sound system and has visual and easy physical access to the Sanctuary (e.g., for Joys & Sorrows).

UUCF Planning for Growth Study Group 1
Report – January 2017

- **Chapel:** This space could accommodate around 50 chairs. It is currently used for Children’s Choir rehearsals during the early service on three out of four Sundays and is also used for the UU Buddhist Fellowship group at 11:00 a.m. two Sundays each month. Room darkening measures listed under the “Technology” section below would definitely be required for this room along with the other sound and video technology needed for all the overflow spaces suggested except the Narthex.
- **Rooms 113/115:** Using classroom-style seating, these two rooms could accommodate approximately 40-50 seats. Unique issues with these rooms include the library bookshelves that reduce seating capacity in Room 113 and a room separator which reduces visibility in Room 115. Set-up of rows of 5-6 chairs with aisles along each side and a center aisle where the room separator is can be done in these rooms.
- **Religious Education Classrooms:**
 - a. Room 119: The Nursery is regularly occupied and the setup is such that this would be very difficult to swap in/out for overflow usage.
 - b. Rooms 123 and 124 are regularly occupied during Services for Arts & Exploration.
 - c. Room 125 (if reconfigured) could accommodate up to 15-20 additional seats for overflow.
- **Technology**
 - a. The building is hard-wired for internet access and wireless devices could also be used to transmit video/audio of Sunday services to overflow rooms. All purchased devices could be portable and moved to the location(s) of choice. The number of cameras, video/flat screens, projectors, speakers, microphones, receivers, etc., would be determined according to the space(s) selected for overflow. Cost is to be determined. Room darkening curtains and/or shutters will be required if projectors are used and certainly would help if videos screens are used, particularly in the Chapel.
 - b. One consideration is that volunteers or paid persons will be required to set up and operate the systems and secure the equipment after Sunday services.
 - c. With the recent move to Comcast for phone, TV, and internet, UUCF’s internet speed has increased and could be increased further. However, the internal WiFi network needs to be assessed to determine its ongoing suitability for use to transmit video/audio to other building locations. A Technology Committee is currently being formed and is planned to meet in January 2017 to explore some of these issues.

3. What is the potential impact of hiring a part/full time membership coordinator on our growth and therefore available budget to pay for possible expansion associated with growth?

- In principle, a part or full-time Membership Coordinator could improve services to Members and make UUCF somewhat more attractive. A Membership Coordinator could

UUCF Planning for Growth Study Group 1
Report – January 2017

encourage new Members to more strongly integrate into the life of the congregation. Over time, this could result in an increase in giving to support projected future growth. This position would not create a need for new office space if the Membership Coordinator worked out of the UUCF office and from home.

4. What is the potential financial impact of hiring a part/full time fund raiser?

- Without knowing the specific scope of duties such a “fundraiser” would have, the SG cannot fully answer this question.
- To the extent a fundraiser would be used to ask current Members and/or Friends to make new/additional yearly pledges to support UUCF, the SG has some major concerns. The Stewardship Team, in conducting the annual Pledge Drive and other fundraising efforts, currently fulfills this role. We are concerned that addition of a part/full-time fundraiser could have a negative impact on the commitment and enthusiasm of the Stewardship Team volunteers for this effort.
- If, however the Board of Trustees is considering the potential hire of a fundraiser to obtain outside (e.g., UUA or other foundation, corporation) support for UUCF, the SG suggests first hiring a consultant to explore whether such a hire would provide a large enough net financial benefit to the congregation. Possible grants we could see as being of value might include money from the UUA to conduct an engineering feasibility study, for instance. Part of the additional money raised would obviously go to pay the fundraiser, so the cost/benefit analysis of such a move would be necessary to undertake here, as well. The SG does not currently have the financial information to make a recommendation under this second scenario.

5. When will we need to increase administrator and facilities hours?

- An increase could be justified immediately for both positions. For example, to quote from an interview (11/1/16) with our Office Administrator (Appendix B), “My work hours regularly exceed 20 hours/week. Typically, they run around 25 hours/week, with an occasional 30-hour week.” Her interview spoke of possibly training 1-2 volunteers to pick up the extra work.

6. How does growth of RE program contribute to our need for additional space? Can scheduling shifts help delay the need for more space? Etc.

- Growth of the RE program contributes to UUCF’s need for additional space when the existing classroom space cannot support the numbers of children that want to participate in the program. The PreK/K/1st class is already overcrowded.
- Suggestions for scheduling changes that could delay the need for more space have been listed above (see under RE Program Suggestions Religious Education-1, through Religious Education -5.)

7. Would paving and lining the parking area significantly increase the number of available parking spaces on the property?

- Paving and lining the lot would not increase the available space for vehicles. It would definitely facilitate efficient use of the existing space, as vehicle spacing would then be uniform.
- Paving and lining the parking lot would be expensive. A 2014 proposal from Dominic's Paving: to lay 4" of hot mix asphalt over the existing stone lot of 30,000 square feet would have cost \$78,000. That does not include painting lines or any permits that may be required. Painting was another \$5,100 for a total of \$83,000 plus permit fees.

8. Is there any way to increase parking on our existing real estate?

- As outlined above under Parking Spaces, the installation of an 8 foot crushed stone apron on the right side of the driveway would enable us to gain, at modest expense, an estimated 13 parking spaces.

9. Is car-pooling from the commuter lot at Elmer Derr and Mt. Zion Roads feasible?

- Car-pooling from the commuter lot is feasible, and has been implemented (primarily by Choir members) for Christmas Eve services in the past. However, it is much less convenient than parking at UUCF and would probably require a dedicated organizer to keep it running smoothly. It is much more readily tolerated as a once-a-year Christmas Eve expedient than it would be as an every-Sunday procedure. A hired shuttle bus service for special occasions like Christmas Eve services might make this more appealing.

10. How sound are the assumptions associated with a continual growth projection? I.e., should (can) we be projecting a new membership plateau? Are there other congregations with similar surrounding population levels that may have growth data of use to us?

- The SG knows of no data that would permit us to forecast a new membership plateau. Plateaus in average Sanctuary attendance have been noted in the past (see Figure 1).
- Major assumptions underlying the growth projection shown in Figure 4 have been listed above. It is for readers of this Report to evaluate the soundness of these assumptions. Recent newspaper articles point to continued population growth in Frederick County and City. Our congregation is growing by 20-30 new Members per year without any measurable marketing or advertising measures.



Building Beloved Community

UUCF 2020 Study Group I Report

January 2017

Appendices A – D

Appendix A - UUCF 2020: Planning for Growth – UUCF Board of Trustees Concept Paper, October 2016

Appendix B – Interviews to Date with UUCF Program Leaders

Appendix C – Matching Wayne Clark space recommendations to UUCF RE Program Spaces

Appendix D – *6 Reasons Your Sanctuary is Smaller Than You Think*

UUCF 2020: Planning For Growth Concept Paper

Introduction

Membership and Sunday service attendance figures for the past several years indicate the UUCF is in a period of sustained growth (Attachments 1 & 2). In order to ensure we both maximize the use of the assets we have to support our growing congregation, and that we plan for potential facilities expansion, the Board of Trustees (BoT) is commissioning the "UUCF 2020: Planning for Growth" Study Group.

Composition

The 2020 Planning for Growth Study Group (hereafter referred to as the "SG") will report to the BoT and include a representative each from the Finance and Facilities planning committees, plus four (4) volunteers who are members of the Congregation.

Purpose

To gather data, analyze it, and present a written report to the BoT recommending the ways UUCF can continue to accommodate our congregation as it continues to grow. The study will consider changes in the size of UUCF facilities as well as operational changes that may delay the need for capital investment in new facilities. The SG will use an open-ended approach to this issue that will facilitate their collecting pertinent data and exploring a wide range of potential solutions.

Deliverable

The SG will deliver its final report to the BoT three (3) months from the date of its formation. The BoT does not intend that this initial report will provide a definitive path forward. Rather, it will provide initial information, analyses, and recommendations on courses of action the BoT may consider in planning follow on studies and activities. The Board expects that it will take an ongoing effort to develop our plan for responding to our congregation's growth. However, it is not our intention that the initial volunteers need to remain on the SG beyond the initial three (3) months term of this project.

Discussion

The WG will project how and when facilities might have to be expanded in the future as our congregation increases in size. It will specifically consider how changes in operating procedures, scheduling, and staffing may delay the need for facilities expansion. Some examples of considerations related to accommodating growth follow. These should only serve as seed ideas, not the sum total of considerations. Solutions considered and proposed that don't involve, or may minimize the size of, new facilities may include considering:

- How might adding a second minister and additional services delay the need for a larger facility?
- Would the use of cameras and video screens enable us to accommodate more people in the building beyond the Sanctuary for large services by establishing overflow room(s) with sound and video of the main service? How would this impact others' use of other areas (i.e., rental income, etc.)
- What is potential impact of hiring a part/full time membership coordinator on our growth and therefore available budget to pay for possible expansion associated with growth?
- What is the potential financial impact of hiring a part/full time fund raiser?

- When will we need to increase administrator and facilities hours?
- How does growth of RE program contribute to our need for additional space? Can scheduling shifts help delay the need for more space? Etc.
- Would paving and lining the parking area significantly increase the number of available parking spaces on the property?
- Is there any way to increase parking on our existing real estate?
- Is car pooling from the commuter lot at Elmer Derr and Mt. Zion Roads feasible?
- How sound are the assumptions associated with a continual growth projection? I.e., should (can) we be projecting a new membership plateau? Are there other congregations with similar surrounding population levels that may have growth data of use to us?
- Etc.

When new or expanded facilities are proposed, a rough order of magnitude estimate of the resources needed to accomplish the expansion and any long term financial commitment associated with the changes (e.g., mortgages, etc.) should be identified. The report and supporting analyses will tie congregational growth and its impacts to projected increases in congregational income to propose a time-phased plan of action that is supported financially.

Stephen Berte
For the Board of Trustees

UUCF Planning for Growth Study Group I
Report – January 2017

Appendix B – Interviews to Date with UUCF Program Leaders

- Administration
- Chapel Communities
- Facilities
- Membership
- Minister
- Music Program
- Religious Education
- Social Events

Note: On the charts for the different Programs, spaces used for the Program itself are highlighted in red, while the spaces used for storage are highlighted in green.

UUCF Facilities Use Information Sheet

Group: *Administration*Person(s) supplying data and estimates: *Karen Reilly*Date of estimate: *11/1/16*

UUCF Activity:

Schedule - Winter (September to May) *no change b/w Winter +*Schedule - Summer (June to August) *Summer.*

Rooms and spaces used by your activity - indicate on chart

Days of the week and times that your activity uses these rooms and spaces.

Indicate on the chart all the spaces at UUCF that are used for storage of materials used in your activity.

Estimate the percentage of that storage space that could be organized more efficiently. *5%**Moving to electronic storage of Administrative Records.*Are any materials used in your activity stored away from UUCF? If so, where? *none*

Do you expect that the number of people involved in your activity will grow, diminish or stay about the same over the next three years? Please give any quantitative estimates you can.

How do you project that your storage needs change over the next three years? - *Should remain about the same.*

My work hours regularly exceed 40 hrs/week. Typically, they have averaged 25 hrs/week, with an occasional 30 hour week. With FSLA (FLSA) beginning soon (Dec 1st), A will be restricted to 20 hrs/week. A am developing a list of activities + tasks that A hope can be done by volunteers. In the next few months, I think we'll need 1-2 volunteers to pick up the extra work.

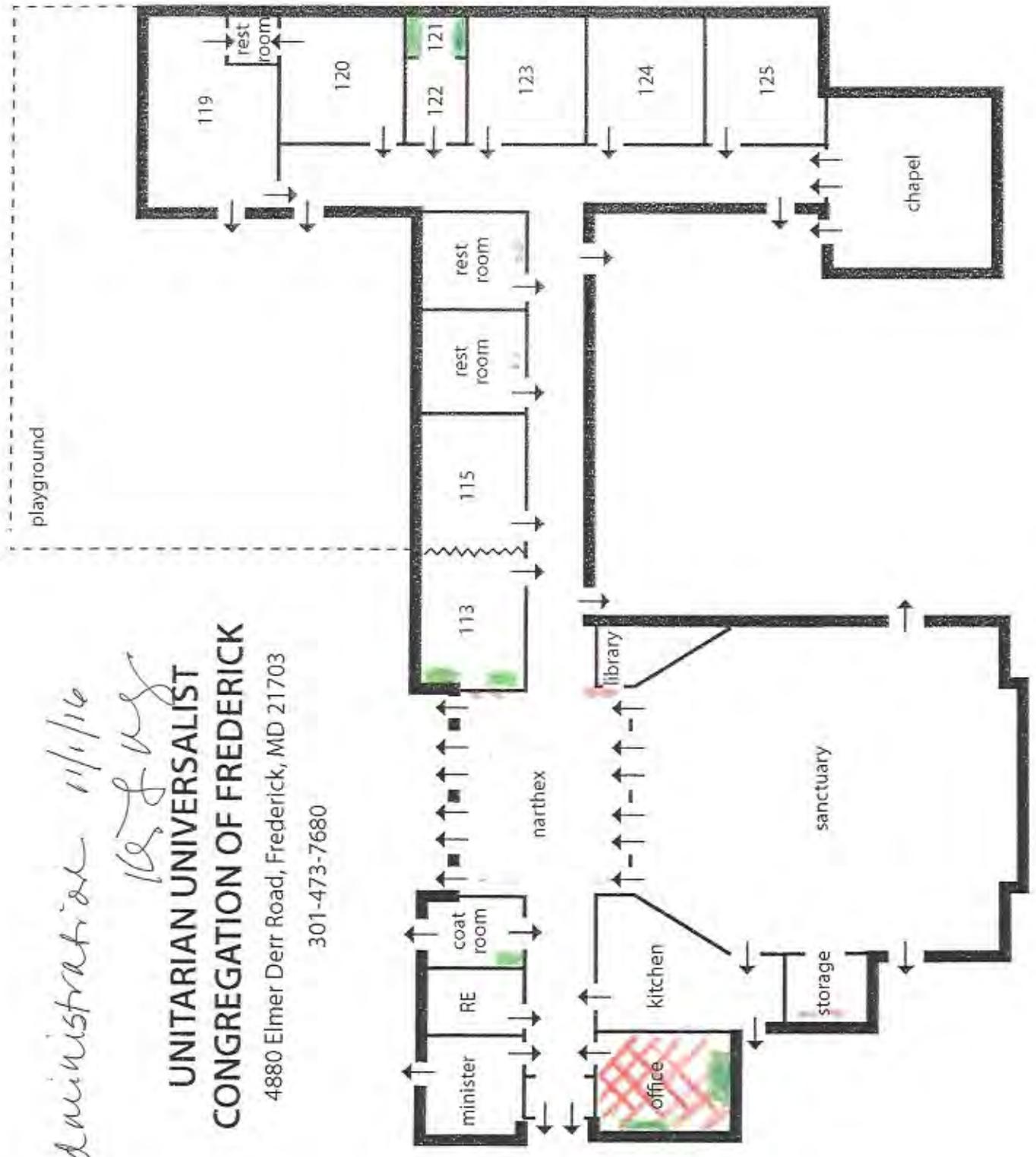
Administration 11/1/16

162 J. W. G.

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UUCF Facilities Use Information Sheet

Group: **Chalice Communities**

Person(s) supplying data and estimates: **Tara Scibelli and Tina Whims**

Date of estimate: **10/30/16**

UUCF Activity: **Yes**

Schedule – **late September through mid-June, day/time varies by individual group**

Rooms and spaces used by your activity – indicate on chart (in red)

Indicate on the chart all the spaces at UUCF that are used for storage of materials used in your activity (in green), if applicable. **N/A**

Days of the week and times that your activity uses these rooms and spaces.

This year we have 5 groups. All currently meet in Room 125 twice/month.

Wednesday – 10 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Thursday – 10 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Sunday – 12:45-2:45 p.m.

Estimate the percentage of that storage space that could be organized more efficiently. **0%**

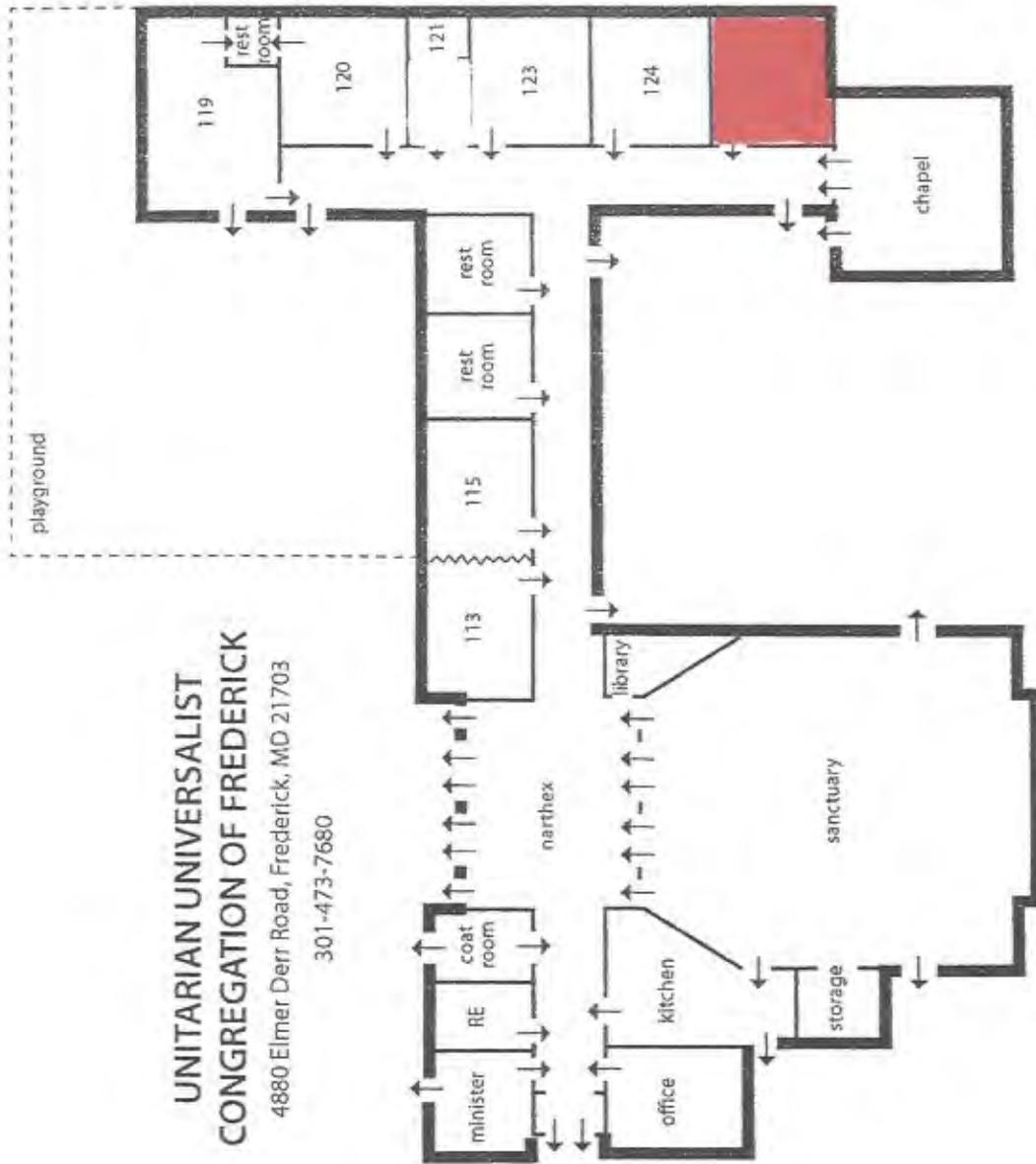
Are any materials used in your activity stored away from UUCF? If so, where? **Not physically, but we have resources online at www.frederickuu.org/chalicefacilitators.**

Do you expect that the number of people involved in your activity will grow, diminish or stay about the same over the next three years? Please give any quantitative estimates you can.

We suspect it will remain about the same at around 60 total participants. Despite congregational growth in recent years, participation in this activity has remained flat. If more groups are offered in future due to demand, we would look at Monday and Tuesday morning and evening times.

How do you project that your storage needs will change over the next three years? **No change.**

Chalice Communities
11/3/16



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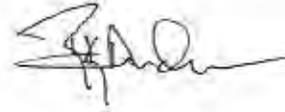
4880 Elmer Derr Road, Frederick, MD 21703

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UUCF Facilities Use Information Sheet

Group: FACILITIES

Person(s) supplying data and estimates: RICK ANDERSON



Date of estimate: 10/23/16

UUCF Activity: Facilities Management

Schedule - Winter (September to May) may need to plow snow

Schedule - Summer (June to August) mow lawn

Rooms and spaces used by your activity - indicate on chart

Days of the week and times that your activity uses these rooms and spaces.

Indicate on the chart all the spaces at UUCF that are used for storage of materials used in your activity. move old office records out of basement = more storage space

Estimate the percentage of that storage space that could be organized more efficiently.

10%

Are any materials used in your activity stored away from UUCF? If so, where?

No

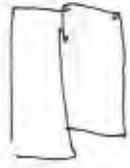
Do you expect that the number of people involved in your activity will grow, diminish or stay about the same over the next three years? Please give any quantitative estimates you can.

Will grow, may need full-time Facilities Manager equivalent

How do you project that your storage needs change over the next three years?

Need to expand one of existing storage sheds to accommodate snow thrower. Proceeding with shed expansion plan in 2016.

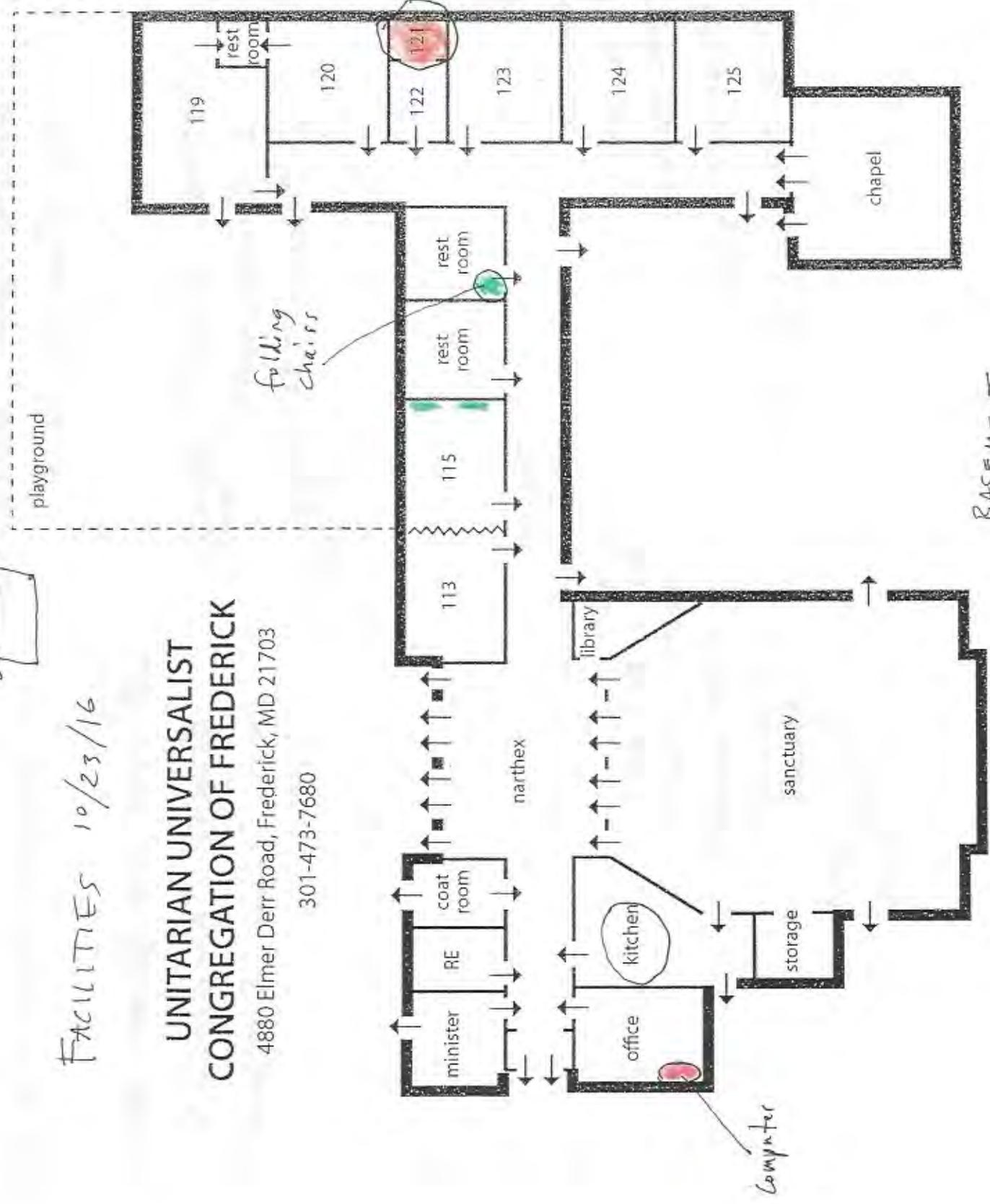
storage sheds (see over)



FACILITIES 10/23/16

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BASEMENT
~~use~~ storage

BASEMENT (ENGINE ROOM (BOILER ROOM) LARGE AMOUNT OF STORAGE OF SUPPLIES/TOOLS etc) *
FIRE PUMP ROOM

8-12

* ONCE OLD RECORDS ARE REMOVED FACILITIES WILL HAVE SUFFICIENT SPACE

2 OUTDOOR SITES / Adapt-a-Road materials
1. GARDEN SITED
2. TRACTOR SITED (NEEDS ADDITION)

RAKES
SHOVELS

SNOW THROWER
LAWN MOWER
WHEEL BARRROW

FERTILIZER / SEEDS
MISC OCCASIONAL USE ITEMS

TRACTOR
Scraper Blade
MOWER

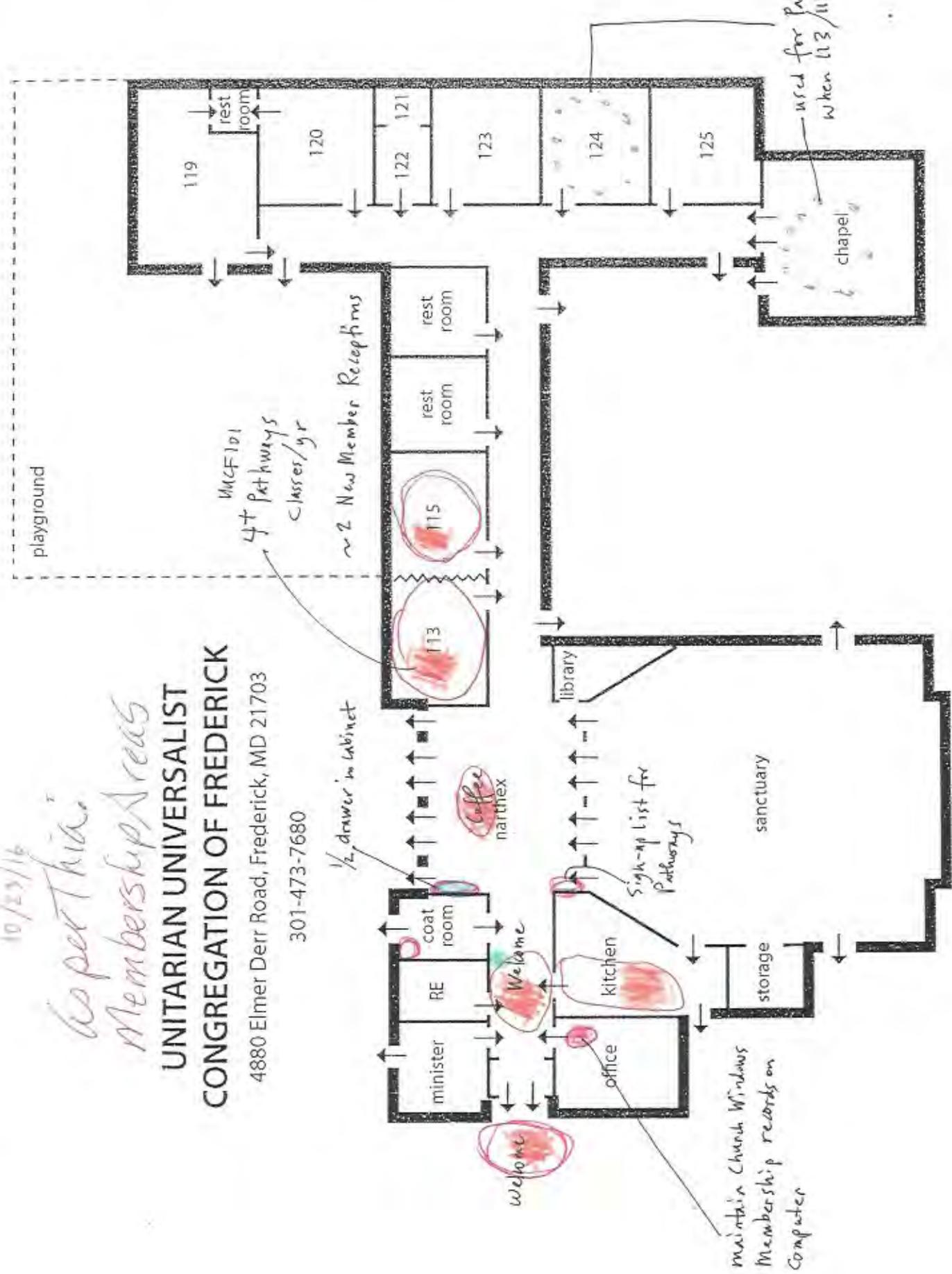
SNOW THROWER
FRONT LOADER
WEED WACKERS
CHAIN SAW
EDGERS

FUEL CANS
TOOLS
MISC

10/23/16
As per Thia,
Membership Areas

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UUCF Facilities Use Information Sheet

Group: Minister

Person(s) supplying data and estimates: Rev. Carl Gregg
Date of estimate: 11/3/16

UUCF Activity: Ministry

Schedule - Winter (September to May) : Two Sunday Services, PCT & Parent Forum

Schedule - Summer (June to August) : One Sunday Service, usually PCT & Parent Forum on
holidays. Sometimes teach one Summer R.E. class.

Rooms and spaces used by your activity - indicate on chart
Days of the week and times that your activity uses these rooms and spaces.

Indicate on the chart all the spaces at UUCF that are used for storage of materials used in your activity.

Estimate the percentage of that storage space that could be organized more efficiently.

Are any materials used in your activity stored away from UUCF? If so, where?

Do you expect that the number of people involved in your activity will grow, diminish or stay about the same over the next three years? Please give any quantitative estimates you can.

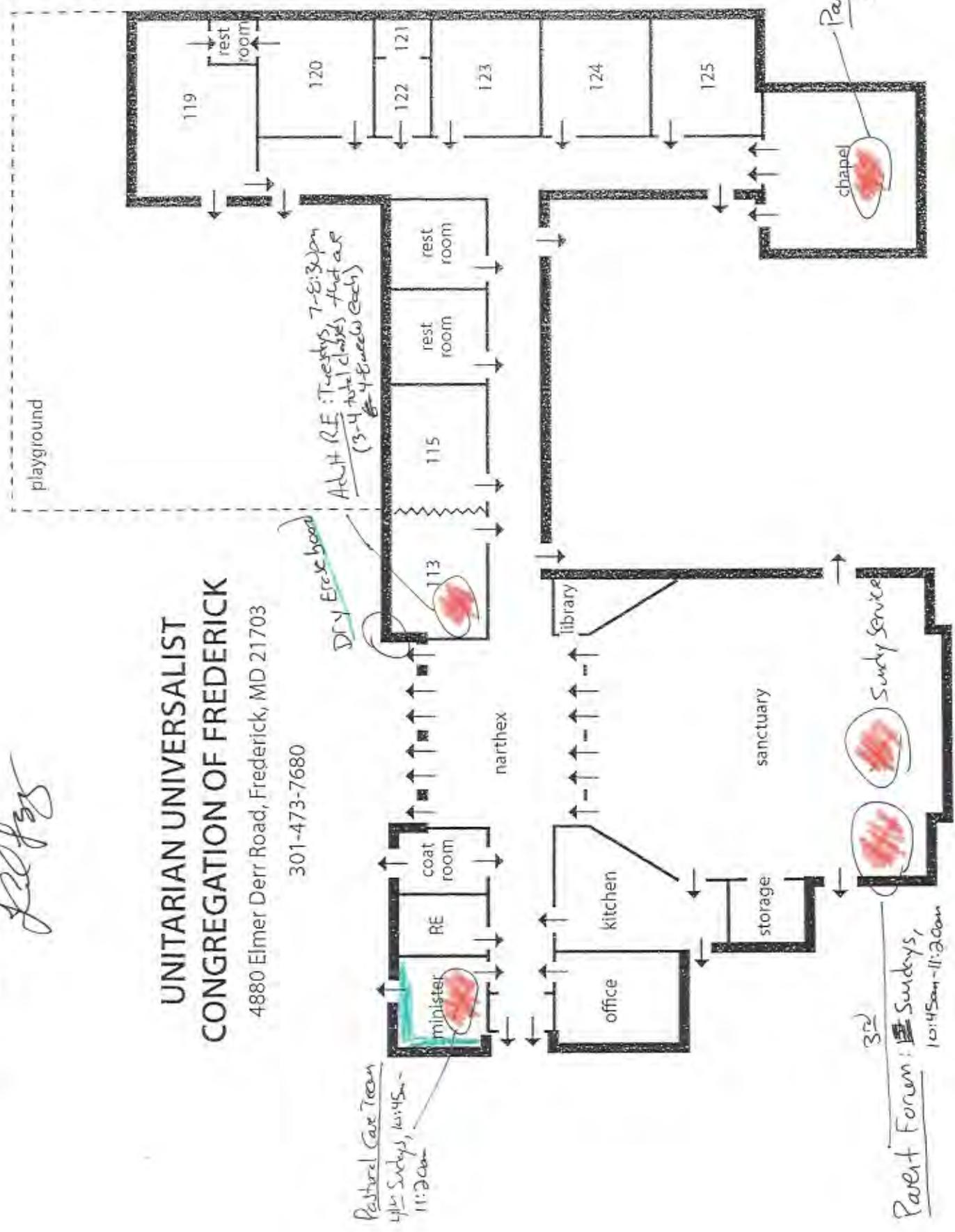
How do you project that your storage needs will change over the next three years?

- Staff Offices

Minister, 11/3/16
J. R. [Signature]

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UUCF Facilities Use Information Sheet

Group: Music program

Person(s) supplying data and estimates: Deb + Nick

Date of estimate: 11/6/16

UUCF Activity: Music program

Schedule - Winter (September to May) Choirs rehearse and perform regularly

Schedule - Summer (June to August) No choirs rehearse or perform during the summers

Rooms and spaces used by your activity - indicate on chart

Days of the week and times that your activity uses these rooms and spaces.

Indicate on the chart all the spaces at UUCF that are used for storage of materials used in your activity.

Estimate the percentage of that storage space that could be organized more efficiently. 10%

Are any materials used in your activity stored away from UUCF? If so, where? 5,000 single copies of Choral music stored at my house

Do you expect that the number of people involved in your activity will grow, diminish or stay about the same over the next three years? Please give any quantitative estimates you can. Grow. 5-10%

How do you project that your storage needs will change over the next three years? Youth ensemble starting Jan 2017

Need more music storage for both children + adults

The constant moving of chairs in the choir loft to allow access to the Kol Ami closet is getting old quickly.

Need to begin the practice of removing un-needed chairs from choir loft on Sunday mornings



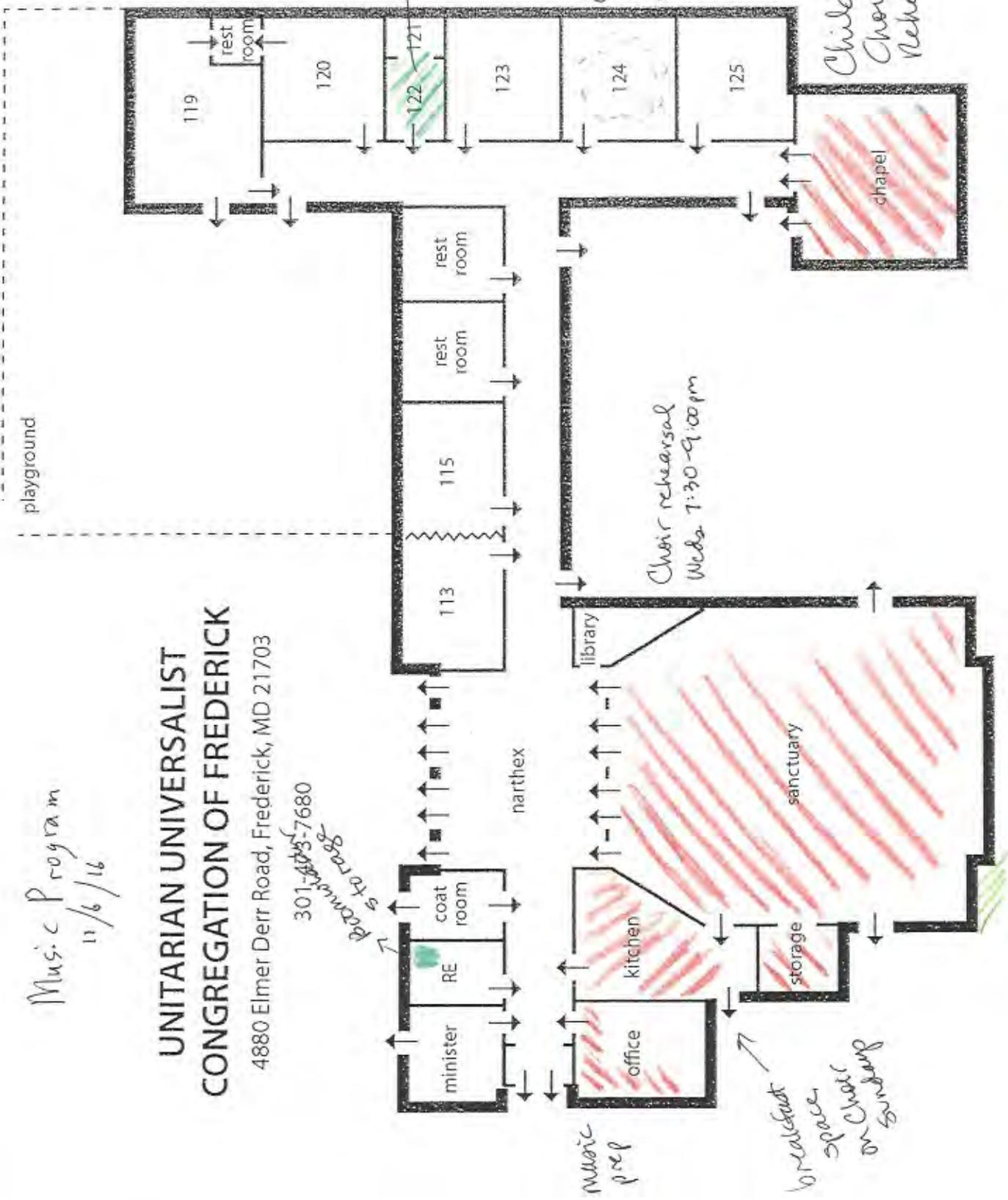
Music Program
11/6/16

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← room for storage



UUCF Facilities Use Information Sheet

Group: Religious Education

Person(s) supplying data and estimates: Lara Powell-Haney

Date of estimate: Nov 4 2016

UUCF Activity: Religious Education and Event Childcare

Schedule - Winter (September to May) A&E two services; 4 RE classes @ 10:30

aftercare for Sunday Chalice; childcare for

Schedule - Summer (June to August) NO RE classes; one room A&E ^{weeknight} classes/parents

Rooms and spaces used by your activity - indicate on chart

Days of the week and times that your activity uses these rooms and spaces. Sunday mornings

Tuesday evenings, Wednesday evenings, Thursday evenings, OWE on

Indicate on the chart all the spaces at UUCF that are used for storage of materials used in your activity. ^{Sunday} evenings

Estimate the percentage of that storage space that could be organized more efficiently. 100% /

5%* through reorganization, might free up storage space in closet 122

Are any materials used in your activity stored away from UUCF? If so, where?

Yes, DRE's home

Do you expect that the number of people involved in your activity will grow, diminish or stay about the same over the next three years? Please give any quantitative estimates you can.

Growth

How do you project that your storage needs will change over the next three years?

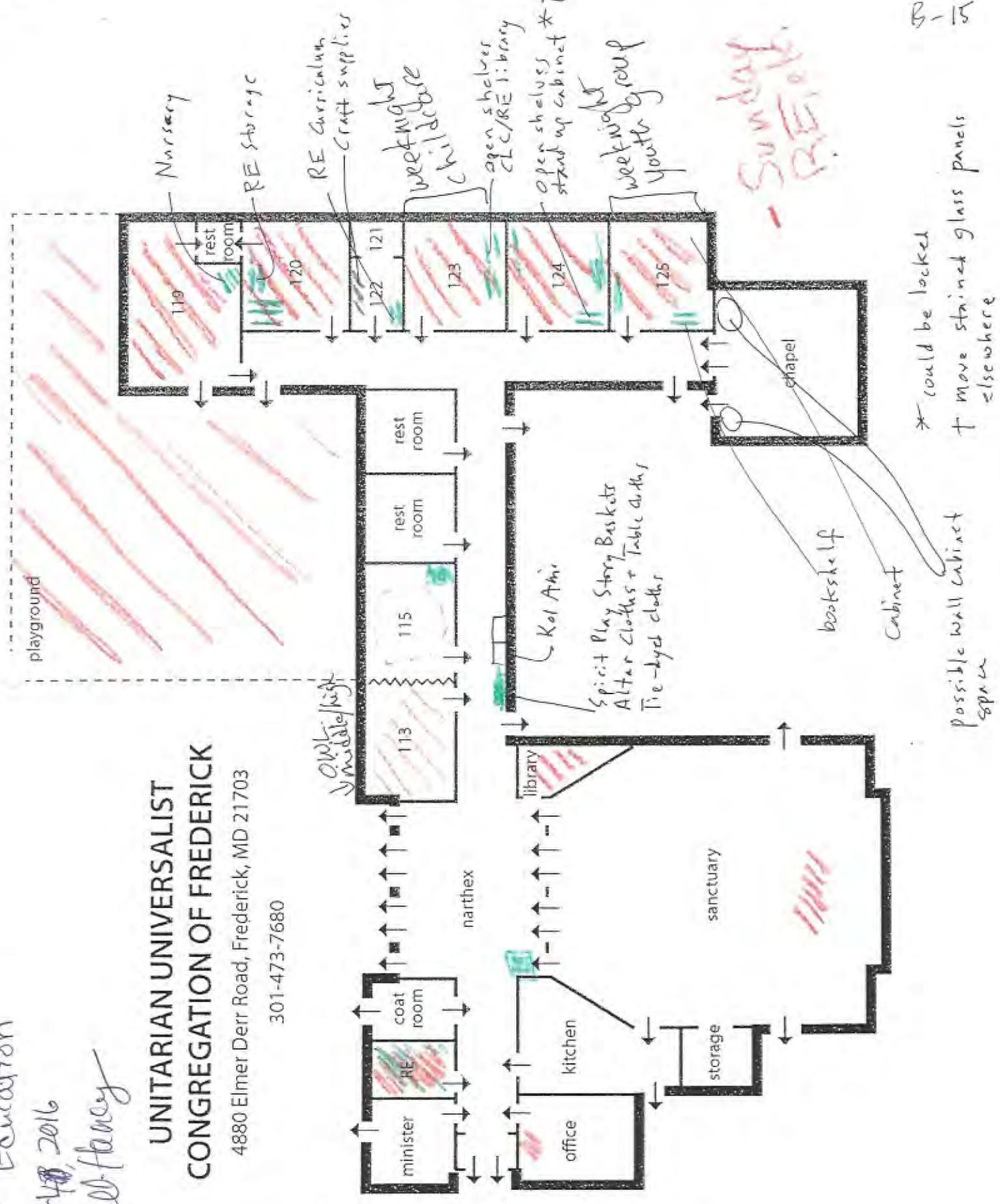
- Storage of bulky items like Spirit Play story baskets, Easter eggs and other seasonal items
- Storage of children's choir instruments, music, clothing?

Seasonal attendance shifts/drops in spring because of spring sports practices and games.

Religion Education
 November 4, 2016
 Anna J. Fawell-Haney

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Social Events 2016

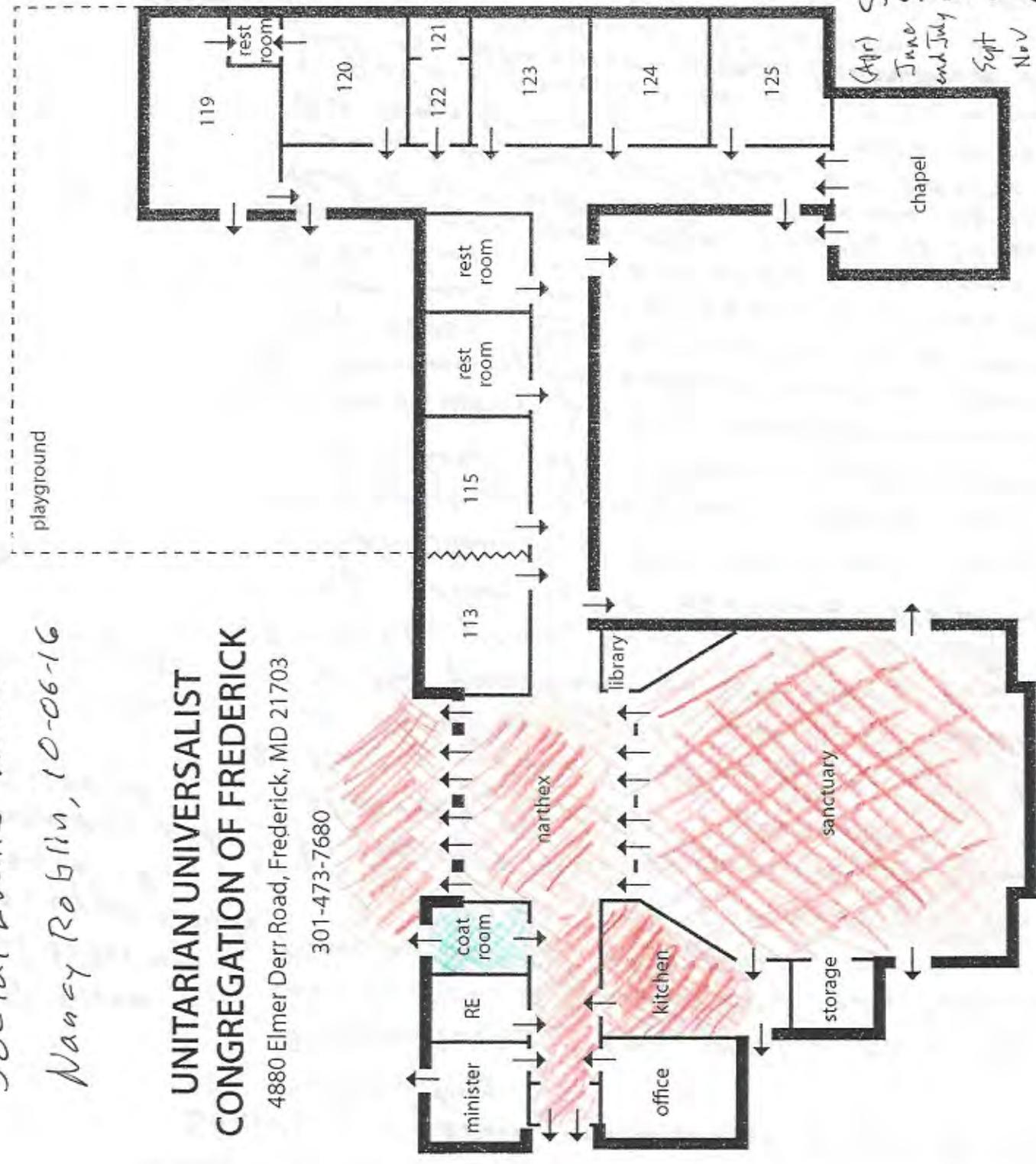
Nancy Roblin, 10-06-16

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B-16



- (Apr) Square Dance
- June Salad Social
- mid July Watermelon Soc.
- Sept Ceili
- Nov Auction Dinner
- Dec Carol Sing / Potluck
- Feb Family Night

use 'i'
store (temporary)



Kitchen Storage Issues

N. Roblin

Short-Term (improving what we have)

Shelving system is excellent but can't store everything

5. Figure out better use for upper cabinets over sink. Currently under-utilized.

current store is inadequate

1. Tablecloths - long plastic bias for white round plus white long tablecloth. Take up a LOT of room.

NO room left for our two large boxes of vinyl tablecloths. Currently stored at Roblin's base.

2. Plastic utensil boxes take up a lot of room on upper shelves. Consider with purchase of stainless flatware

3. Pots, pans, bowls for cooking, take up lower left shelves. No other place for them as they are very bulky

4. Serving equipment - bowls, water pitchers, etc. take up upper right shelves

- Solutions:
- A for (2) - buy flatware, eliminate plastic
 - B Purchase upper cabinet system plus a step stool. But, expensive to do because upper wall must be rebuilt (it has no studs)
 - C Purchase out door shed to be placed near kitchen garbage area. Limits to it are that it will not be rodent-safe so linens cannot be kept out there, or plastic items. But large boxes + bins for serving equipment + pots + pans could be put in a shed or well as steamer-trays (currently at Roblin)

Long-term (Kitchen of the future....)
A Professional kitchen, with a real dishwasher, a good stove, large refrigerator, multiple cabinets and shelving systems will all be needed.

Report of the UUCF 2020 Planning for Growth Study Group
January 2017

Appendix C – Matching Wayne Clark space recommendations to UUCF RE Program Spaces

Recommendations¹

Age Group	Persons/Room	Ft ² /Person	Teacher/Pupil Ratio (2 per rm.)
Infants	4-10	3' betw. Cribs	1 for 4-6 pupils
Toddlers	6-10	30-35	1 for 4-6 pupils
Twos	6-10	30-35	1 for 4-6 pupils
Threes	8-12	30-35	1 for 4-6 pupils
K (4-5 yr old)	10-20	30-35	1 for 6-10 pupils
Grades 1-6	12-25	25-30	1 for 6-10 pupils
Grades 7-12	12-25	20-25	1 for 6-12 pupils

UUCF Classroom	RE Class	Max pupils based on Square footage	UUCF Fall 2016 Average Attendance
120	Pre-K/K/First	358/32.5 = 11	13.1
123	Grades 2-4	339/27.5 = 12.33	8.7
124	Grades 5-8	339/25 = 13.56	8.5
125	Grades 9-12	339/22.5 = 15	3.8

Because the recommendations use a range of ft²/Person, we have taken the average of the range to use in these calculations. For the Grades 5-8 class two overlapping ranges are given and we have chosen 25 as the best overall number.

The square footage numbers for the different classrooms were determined from the wall dimensions for an empty room. The working square footage for all the classrooms is less than that number because of storage cabinets and sinks on walls and furniture in the room. Thus the results are expressed as the maximum number of pupils per classroom.

¹ Clark, Wayne B., *Beyond Fundraising: A Complete Guide to Congregational Stewardship*, Unitarian Universalist Association, 2007 - Interior Program Space by Group, page 153
Also Tomberlin, J. and T. Cool, *Church Locality: New Rules for Church Buildings in a Multisite, Church Planting, and Giga-Church World* (2014). Available as a Kindle Edition from Amazon.com

The Strategic Church – accessed online November 1, 2016

6 Reasons Your Sanctuary is Smaller Than You think

The most common reason why high quality churches still aren't growing is that they are physically full and don't know it.

Part of the problem is that *everybody* over-estimates the size of their sanctuary – and I mean *everybody*. Big churches, small churches, city churches, and town churches all overestimate their seating capacity. There are many possible reasons for this. Perhaps their numbers are based on the fire-marshal's maximum capacity limits – beyond which it is unsafe to have more. Maybe they base their numbers on a record-breaking funeral or Christmas evc service when people were packed in shoulder-to-shoulder and thigh-to-thigh. Who knows? There may even be a little bit of pride in being just a bit bigger. Whatever the reason, over-estimation of seating capacity hides the reality of needed expansion, and therefore stifles and chokes out the possibility of additional growth. Having a *realistic* understanding of your seating capacity is vital in identifying when your growth potential has been straight-jacketed by your building.

Here are 6 Reasons why your sanctuary is smaller than you think:

#1 – The Front Row Doesn't Count

Nobody, especially visitors, wants to sit in the front row. For whatever reason people feel insecure and exposed there and will only sit in the front in an emergency. Because this is really a no-man's land, don't bother counting it as part of your seating capacity. As far as visitors and growth is concerned, it simply isn't part of your useable seating.

#2 – The Over-Flow Doesn't Count

From a visitor's perspective, over-flow seating stinks. Although you may have the oddball regular who actually *likes* it, visitors are not impressed with the bad seats, bad view, bad sound, and often lack of pew-back promotional materials. If you are regularly using your over-flow it is time to expand – either an additional service, an additional site, or a larger building. If you are regularly *filling* your over-flow then expansion is over-due and your facility is definitely choking out your growth possibilities.

#3 – Don't count the Centers of Very Long Pews

Even *if* visitors didn't mind crawling over 5 or 10 people just to get to an empty seat it really wouldn't matter. From their vantage point coming in the back of the sanctuary they can't see that there are any empty seats there in the first place. This is *absolutely* true if they arrive just a bit late when everyone is standing and singing. It may be nice that the pastor can see some room from up on stage, but that doesn't help them at all. The centers of very long pews

are inaccessible to visitors, and shouldn't be counted as part of your usable seating capacity. This is also a good thing to keep in mind if you are about to build – shorter pews are better.

#4 – Most People Aren't Anorexic Super-Models

When you measure your seating capacity make sure you give at least 24" per person. This doesn't assume that everybody is 2 feet wide, but ensures people have enough room for their purse and their Bible. No one, especially visitors, likes to sit thigh-to-thigh with a stranger. People will naturally spread out a bit and will naturally take at least 24" of space.

#5 – Your Ushers lack training

Because 95% of churches do not have any training for their ushers, there is a 95% chance that you don't either. A trained usher will boldly walk down the aisle and look for empty spots and will ask people to shuffle in to make room. A visitor will do neither of these things. If your ushers merely shake hands and give out bulletins, then round your seating capacity down a bit more.

#6 – The 80% Rule

The 80% rule is this: once you have reached 80% full – you're full. While on special occasions you might be able to forcibly pack people in and get beyond 80% capacity – you will never be able to do this on a regular basis. After you reach 80% full the quality of the visitor's experience goes down dramatically. Beyond 80% your visitors will have a hard time sitting together as a family (they weren't looking for one empty seat, but a block of four). Beyond 80% your visitors will not have any room for their belongings. Beyond 80% your visitors will be uncomfortably rubbing thighs with strangers. Beyond 80% your visitors do not have any real choice of where they want to sit. Beyond 80% your visitors will not come back.

What do I do about this?

After you have physically measured your pews and made all the necessary adjustments mentioned above you should have a realistic understanding of your seating capacity. Now take your average attendance and see how close you're getting to that 80% high-water mark. If you're anything over 70% then it is time to start making plans to add an additional service, an additional venue, or a new building. If you're not at this point and are still having trouble growing then take a good look at your parking lot 10 minutes after the service starts – you may be choking people out before they even get in the building. If parking space and seating capacity are still good, then you may have some significant spiritual or quality issues you need to deal with.