

# First Unitarian Universalist Church



## Ends, Vision and Values: How First Church is Making a Difference in the World

1. Ends Statement One..... page 2
2. Ends Statement Two..... page 2
3. Ends Statement Three..... page 3
4. Ends Statement Four..... page 3-4
5. Ends Statement Five..... page 4
6. Ends Statement Six..... Page 4

Revised 1/18/2012


### 1. Global End Statement (Mission)

Firmly grounded in our Unitarian Universalist principles, we join together on the path of spiritual and intellectual growth to promote and celebrate community, diversity, and social justice for a healthier and more equitable world.

First Church is a community of love beyond belief: transforming ourselves, Houston and the world.

- 1.1 First Church is a powerful voice for progressive ideals and action; feeding souls and changing lives.
- 1.2 Our Worship fosters spirituality, compassion and community, inspiring us to go into the world and reach for our best selves.
- 1.3 Our lifespan religious education programs provide tools to help us grow spiritually, build stronger families, improve relationships and make the world a better place.
- 1.4 We are equipped, empowered and compelled to do justice and to serve. "Doing justice" includes signature service projects, signature community partnerships and giving generously of our time and treasure.
- 1.5 First Church is a magnet for innovative ventures that spark our creative energies and meet the needs of underserved populations.
- 1.6 Our strong and diverse music ministry unites us, feeds our spirits and brings joy to the world.

First Church values and affirms the inherent worth of each person. We value personal spiritual growth through lifelong education in this free religious tradition. We value active participation in the local, national and world communities. We value our connection to the interdependent web of life.



**Ends Statement One:** *"First Church is a powerful voice for progressive ideals and action; feeding souls and changing lives."*


**INTERPRETATION/DEFINITION**

**Powerful voice:** First Church is influential in our civic and religious community.

**Progressive ideals & action:** We promote progress toward an "earth made fair, and all her people one."

**Feeding souls:** Our worshipping community regularly engages in activities where we learn new things, and are moved emotionally, and are called to act.

**Changing lives:** Our members and friends regularly report to us that being part of the First Church community has transformed their life for the better.



**Ends Statement Two:** *"Our worship fosters spirituality, compassion and community, inspiring us to go into the world and reach for our best selves."*

**INTERPRETATION/DEFINITION**

**Worship:** Our acts, ceremonies, and religious services, including but not limited to Sunday worship, seasonal celebrations and rites of passage.

**Spirituality:** A connection of intimacy with ultimate reality.

**Compassion:** When our spiritual development causes us to act with love towards others.

**Community:** Spirituality and compassion that bring us closer to others.

**Go into the world:** The fostered growth and inspiring worship that causes us to take the transformative grace and love we learn in our Unitarian Universalist faith outside our walls to share with others.

**Reach for our best selves:** When a deepening of spirituality, compassion, and sense of community cause us to demonstrate our faith (deeds, not creeds).

**Ends Statement Three:** *"Our lifespan education programs provide tools to help us grow spiritually, build stronger families, improve relationships and make the world a better place."*

#### **INTERPRETATION/DEFINITION**

**Lifespan education programs:** programs for groups including Nursery (age three and under), Children (Preschool through 5<sup>th</sup> grade), Youth (grade 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>), Adults, and Families.

**Education:** nurture of the whole person as well as instruction in a body of knowledge.

**Tools:** the means, understanding, and/or approaches needed to shape, form, develop, and acquire knowledge and make meaning.

**Grow Spiritually:** to mature in our faith; gaining understanding and ability to make use of spiritual practices, deepening Unitarian Universalist identity, increasing familiarity with different sources of inspiration, and informing ourselves about social justice, and the interrelated web of existence. In order to grow spiritually, participants need to be present sufficiently to benefit from the programs.

**Build Stronger Families:** parents or guardians and their children will participate in church life together, sharing in times such as Closing Circle on Sunday mornings and in the activities of the Family Night Out program, and participating in programs that are directed toward family life.

**Improve Relationships:** people within our community communicate and interact in ways that serve each other better than in the past, and that this extends to relationships beyond our walls.

**Make the World a Better Place:** participants who gain these tools are strengthened and equipped to make a positive difference in the world. The Adult Programs receive a minimum of twenty positive comments about the program per year through the surveys or in other forms such as email and oral comment.

**Ends Statement Four:** *"We are equipped, empowered and compelled to do justice and to serve. "Doing justice" includes signature service projects, signature community partnerships and giving generously of our time and treasure."*

#### **INTERPRETATION/DEFINITION**

**Equipped:** We have the necessary tools and resources.

**Empowered:** We have the necessary authority and access.


**Compelled:** When there is need we can be sure we will rise to the occasion and be effective.

**Do Justice and Serve:** While addressing the root causes that lead to social injustice, we also provide support to victims of the injustice.

(Ends Statement Four continued)

**Signature Service Projects:** A signature project has several criteria:

1. A minimum three year commitment
2. Local to our metro area
3. Includes these components: education, advocacy, hands on work, public relations
4. Is designed to get us better known in our metro area as part of our identity
5. The entire congregation has been informed through a variety of media about participation opportunities




**Ends Statement Five:** *"First Church is a magnet for innovative ventures that spark our creative energies and meet the needs of underserved populations."*

**INTERPRETATION/DEFINITION**

**Innovative ventures:** Original and creative projects encouraging participation

**Creative energies:** Vibrant activity characterized by originality

**Underserved populations:** Religious liberals, both theist and non-theist



**Ends Statement Six:** *"Our strong and diverse music ministry unites us, feeds our spirits and brings joy to the world."*

**INTERPRETATION/DEFINITION**

**Strong:** Our music ministry infuses the life of the congregation in many ways: it provides spiritual nourishment and an avenue for expressing what cannot be expressed in words. A strong music program has depth, breadth and power.

**Diverse:** A diverse music ministry includes participants of various ages and talents and incorporates a variety of musical genres and instruments.

**Unites:** Our music ministry articulates and emphasizes our principles, purposes, mission, vision and values.

**Feeds Our Spirits:** Our music ministry feeds our spirits by integrating music into the worship experience in a coherent way. It encourages thoughtful reflection and spiritual growth.

**Brings Joy to the World:** Our music ministry reaches beyond the worship service. We share our musical talents with the larger community beyond our doors.