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# UUUs of Mt. Airy

## Strategy Team Proposal

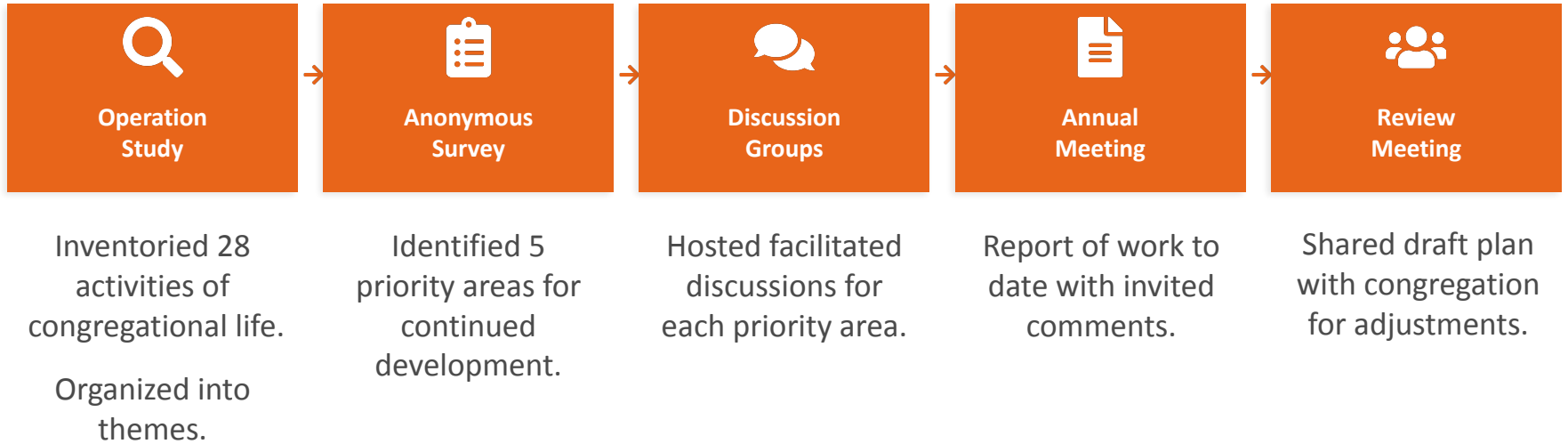
Congregational Meeting  
February 22, 2026

The plan's purpose is to help  
advance our Mission:

*Building Beloved Community by  
embracing all souls and nurturing  
wholeness*

with collective intention.

# Planning Process



# Findings & Priorities

# Survey & Discussion Group Priorities

1



## Governance and Communication

*Transparent, inclusive decision-making*

2



## Music and Spiritual Enrichment

*The heart of our worship life and spiritual formation*

3



## Hospitality and Newcomer Engagement

*Creating pathways from visitor to engaged member*

4



## Social Justice Integration

*Living our values through action and witness*

5



## Building and Grounds

*Stewarding our physical space and land for mission*

## Music & Spiritual Enrichment

- Navigate music director transition
- Integrate worship elements cohesively, including music
- **More variety of spiritual traditions and worship modes**
- Strengthen preparation for services
- Spiritual depth
- **Increase Adult RE opportunities**
- Kid/youth/family programs

*Items in bold are already in process!*

## Social Justice Integration

- Connect justice work with theology/spirituality
- Coordinate across multiple initiatives
- Education on anti-racism, anti-oppression and accountability
- **Education on other justice issues**
- More opportunities for congregational engagement
- Sustainable engagement without burnout
- Continue to develop community partnerships with accountability

## Building & Grounds

- Develop long-term land and building plan
- Balance maintenance with mission use
- Revive I Care Days
- Enhance accessibility (2nd floor)
- **Plans for solar panels, outdoor spaces, gardens, climate justice**
- Revitalize playground, grounds

## Hospitality & Newcomer Engagement

- Create clear pathways from visitor to member to leader
- Integrate Hospitality/coffee hour with New UU/Membership team
- Develop leadership pipeline
- Integrate nominating process with leadership development
- Publicize involvement opportunities
- **Healthy Relationships Team**

## Governance & Communication

- ✓ Create accountability frameworks with defined roles and responsibilities
- ✓ Enhance leadership development opportunities
- ✓ Clarify committee missions, scopes, and procedures
- ✓ **Implement regular, transparent, prompt communication about Board work**
- ✓ Develop clear pathways for member involvement in governance
- ✓ More intentional documentation and written policies

# Operating Tenets

*Six principles to guide all our work.*

1

## **Balancing Ambition with Scale**

Right-sizing our dreams to our capacity

2

## **Communication**

Systematic information flow, access, and transparency

3

## **Capacity Building**

Preventing burnout while expanding capability

4

## **Assessment / Accountability**

Creating feedback loops for continuous improvement

5

## **Engagement**

Meaningful participation pathways for all

6

## **Shared Leadership**

Distributing authority and responsibility throughout the congregation

# Meaningful change requires structural AND cultural transformation.

## Structural Change

- Clear communication pathways and norms
- Organized electronic records/archive
- Discussion in rounds (balanced listening)
- Shared leadership and distributed responsibility & authority
- Defined roles with autonomy
- Built-in assessment & accountability
- Transparent decision-making processes

## Cultural Evolution

- Deepening radical hospitality
- Expanding democratic inclusive participation
- Building sustainable engagement
- Preventing volunteer burnout
- Fostering continuous learning

# Why this proposal?

- ✔ to assess and improve our shared Ministries,
- ✔ to go together and not alone
- ✔ more inclusive decision making, including financial and budgeting
- ✔ clear membership engagement and nurturing
- ✔ create avenues of leadership development.
- ✔ hear from more of us, more often

# Addressing governance & communication issues by moving toward an Inclusive Dynamic Governance model

(sometimes called sociocracy), which replaces traditional Board-and-Committees structure with interconnected circles of autonomy, communication, and shared responsibility. It is intended to find a balance between efficiency and inclusion. It ensures that all voices are heard and respected, but is able to get things done effectively and in a timely way, and emphasizes experimentation and continuous learning.

# How Inclusive Dynamic Governance Circles Work

## Consent-Based Decisions

Proposals move forward when no one has a reasoned objection based on the group aim, ensuring all voices matter.

## Rounds

Each person speaks in turn, creating balanced listening and preventing dominant voices.

## Defined Domains

Each circle has a clear aim and scope of responsibility and authority within which it operates autonomously.

## Sociocratic Selection

Circles choose their own leaders through an open, positive, transparent nomination process.

## Meeting Evaluations

Every meeting ends with reflection, fostering continuous improvement.

## Interconnection

Circles connect to the Coordinating Circle, ensuring communication across the whole.

# The Minister's Role

## Core Responsibilities

The minister serves as the congregation's primary spiritual leader—responsible for pastoral care, worship leadership, and spiritual teaching within a shared-ministry model.

- Communal worship creation and implementation
- Pastoral care and support through life transitions
- Presence at meetings as facilitator or advisor
- Orienting the board toward mission stewardship

## Within Our Circle Model

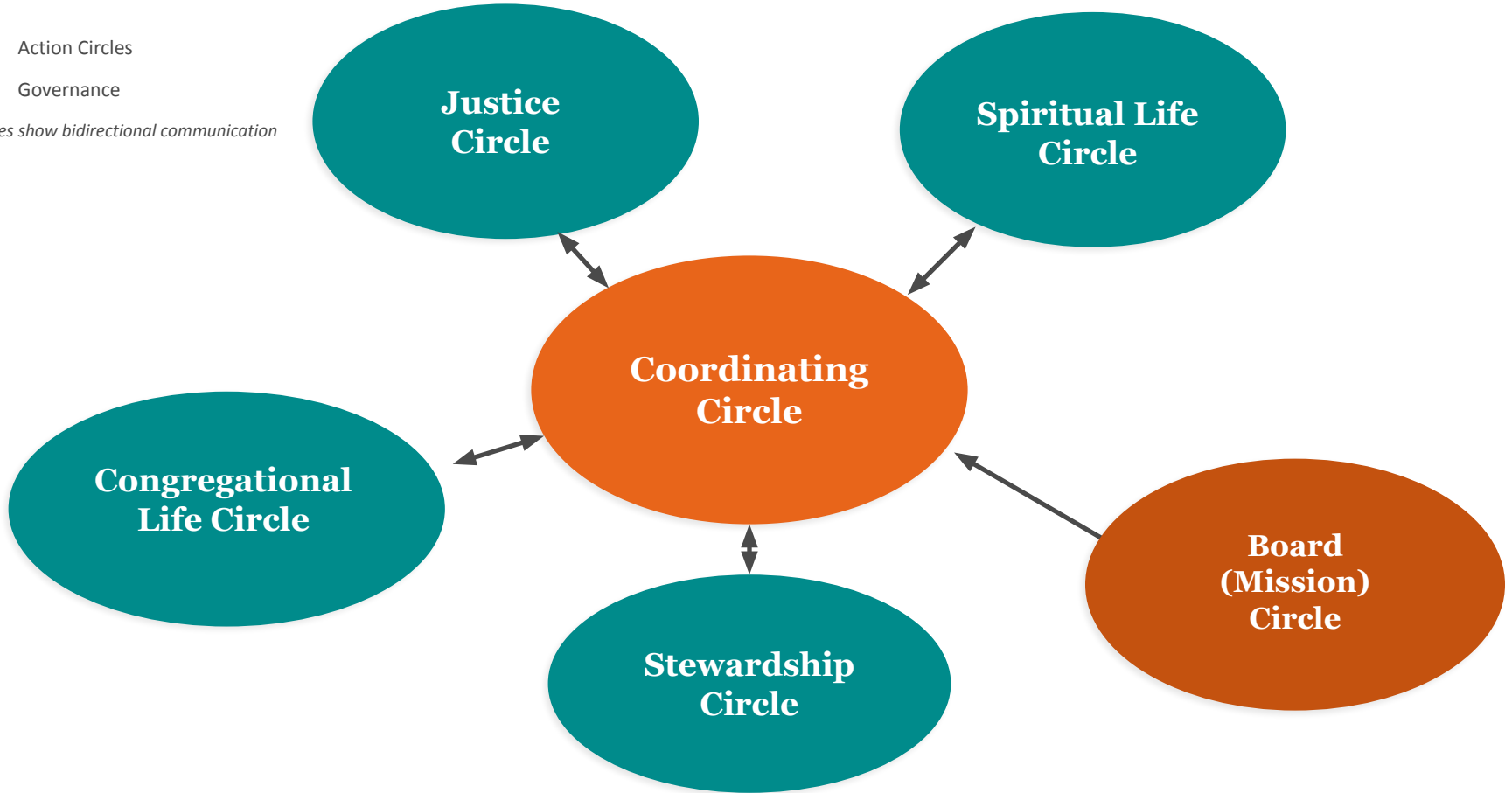
- Can encourage new circles
- Connects circles to build communication rhythms
- Advises circles to support overall mission
- Facilitates restorative practices when conflict arises
- Acts as “grease” helping the wheels turn smoothly

*Important: The minister may speak from personal conscience with freedom of the pulpit, but should not speak on behalf of the congregation without consent from the Mission Circle.*

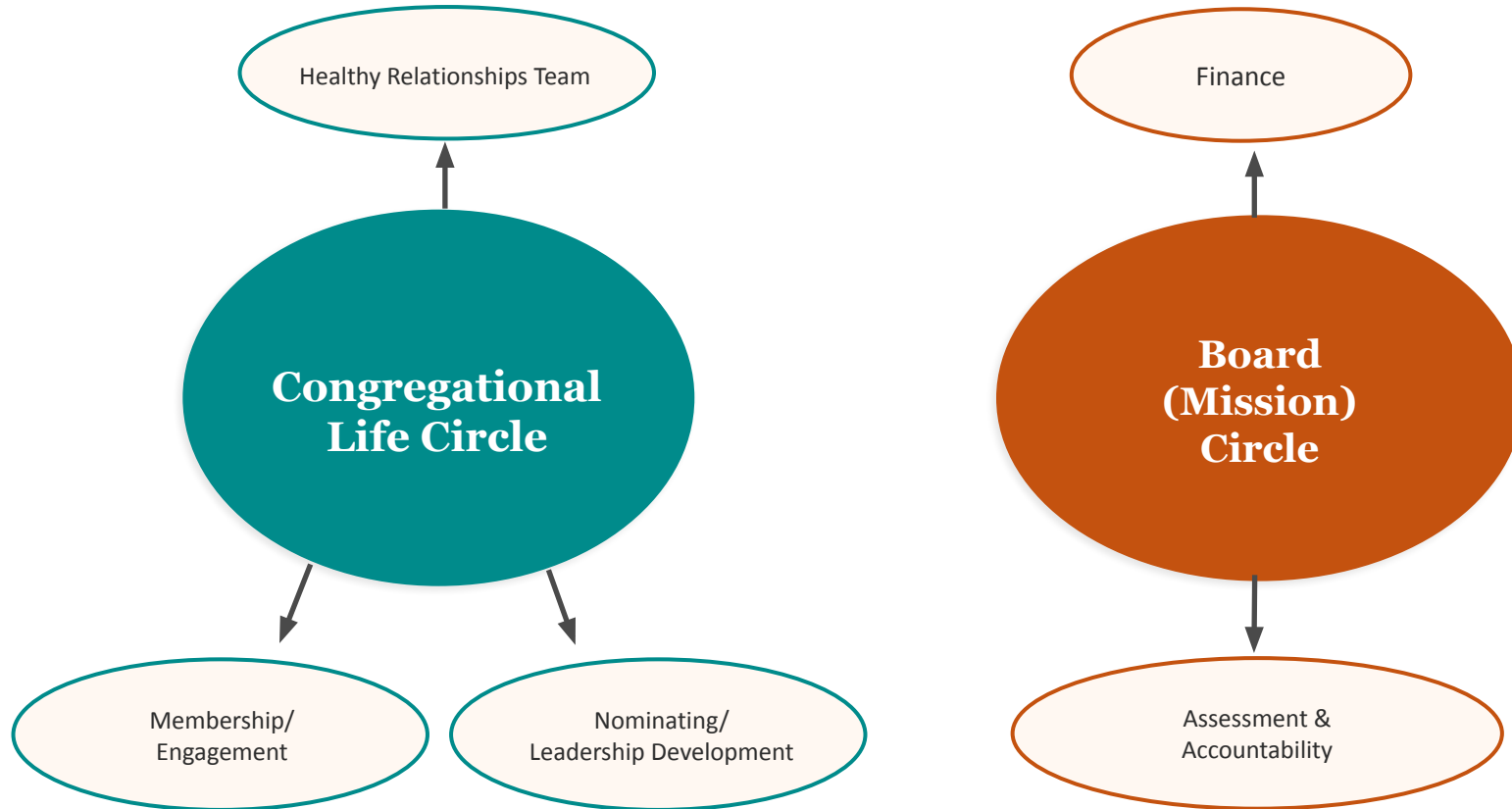
# Proposed Circle Structure

- Action Circles
- Governance

*Lines show bidirectional communication*



# Circle Details



# Potential Allocation of Teams Across Circles

## Justice Circle

- Pantry
- UUJME
- POWER
- UUJusticePA
- Justice Book Discussion

## Congregational Life Circle

- Hospitality
- Membership/engagement
- Nominations/leadership development
- Small group ministries
- Healthy Relationships

## Spiritual Life Circle

- Worship Associates
- Music (Choir and Handbells)
- Religious education and exploration (all ages)
- Soul Circle
- Pastoral care

# Potential Allocation of Teams Across Circles

## Stewardship Circle

- Land and buildings
- Climate justice
- Pledge drive
- Reparations [pooling our assets and resources to sustain UUMtAiry & the greater good]

## Coordinating Circle

- Folk Factory
- Garden
- Technology/Archives/Policies & Procedures Task Force
- Communications

# Starting & Joining Circles

## How Circles Get Started

- 1 Any member of the congregation can suggest a project or activity, which could become a circle
- 2 A member of a root circle can propose a new branch circle, including its domain and at least 3 Members
- 3 The root circle would approve the proposed circle and an initial convener by Consent
- 4 The new circle chooses their leader (and any other roles) by Sociocratic Selection

## How People Join

- ➔ Express interest to circle leader or facilitator
- ➔ Attend as a non-voting participant (participating in Rounds) to learn about the work for 3 meetings
- ➔ Express to the leader or facilitator their intention to be a member of the circle
- ➔ Only congregational Members may vote on circle decisions
- ➔ Members are expected to inform the leader or facilitator when they wish to withdraw

*Key Principle: Circles decide their own meeting frequency, duration, and policies/procedures within their domain.*

# Inclusive Dynamic Governance and UU Values

*How does inclusive governance express our UU Values?*

## **Inherent Worth & Dignity**

*Equity, Justice, Pluralism*

Rounds ensure everyone's voice is heard on equal footing.

## **The 8th Principle**

*Transformation*

Rounds and Consent counteract White Supremacy Culture by equalizing power dynamics.

## **Interdependent Web**

*Interdependence*

Emphasizes communication and interdependence within our congregation.

## **Democratic Process**

*Conscience & Democracy*

Ensures broad participation in decision making and community engagement.

## **Free & Responsible Search**

*Truth & Meaning*

Hearing each other through Rounds and Consent draws us closer to collective wisdom, evaluation fosters continuous learning.

# From Here to There: The Work Ahead



Virtual archives (organization of documentation of activities, as well as policies and procedures)



Integrating leadership development and Nominations



Integrating newcomer engagement with Membership



Meeting needs of families



Education about systemic racism and other oppressions, accountability, and privilege



Continue developing community partnerships

# Implementation Phases



# How We'll Know It's Working

## Structural Indicators

- Number of active circles formed
- Clear aims and domains for each circle
- Use of check-ins, rounds, Consent, selection, evaluations

## Cultural Indicators

- Increased participation in circles and governance
- New voices in leadership roles
- Reduced volunteer burnout

## Process Indicators

- Training completion rates
- Member satisfaction with transparency
- Newcomer integration into circles
- Rounds and Consent becoming natural (year 1)

# Appendix

# Learning Together

## Key Resources



Many Voices One Song by Ted Rau & Jerry Koch-Gonzalez



From Here to There – Implementation guide (Sociocracy For All)



Sociocracy For All online training (ideally in groups of 4–7)



UUA Discernment Circle Training



UU Institute's Empowered Learning Circle format

Training Concept: Monthly workshops in March, April, May—designed for practical application.

*Already Living It: Justice Council is already functioning as a working model of the circle approach.*