

Central Unitarian Church Develops New Mission

Last year, three seminal events converged at Central Unitarian Church (Paramus NJ): the establishment of a Learning Team (LT) based on Alice Mann's *book Raising the Roof*, a congregational need for a fresh mission, and confirmation of our minister's sabbatical leave for 2007.

The LT's work revealed that our congregation had reached and maintained membership numbers that put us solidly in a "program-sized" church while our services and overall culture felt more in line with a smaller "pastoral-sized" congregation. The LT's recommendations to the congregation were incorporated in a dynamic worship service.

Recommendations in hand, the Board made preparations at the annual board of trustees retreat for a congregational retreat to accomplish two tasks: create a unifying mission statement by the congregation and prioritize actions that had come out of the year-long LT study and work.

On November 12, the congregation overwhelmingly approved a new mission statement and signed up to support specific actions that had been prioritized by a task force related to the mission development.

We read our new mission statement with confidence every Sunday and it represents our thinking about the future of Central Unitarian Church. The mission statement reads:

Central Unitarian Church welcomes all
Into a home of spiritual diversity
That challenges us to
 Become our best selves
 Minister to one another in love, and
 Serve the greater community

The mission development process and the action planning were affirming. We are more focused in our efforts and more dedicated to carrying on the work we have chosen while our minister renews himself during his sabbatical. For those congregations interested in knowing more about this process and our progress the board would be pleased to share our learning and insights.

– Michael Patrick, Central Unitarian Church