

An Appreciative Inquiry-guided Meditation

(Adapted from Clergy Leadership Institute www.clergyleadership.com)

Imagine a congregation where people welcome, accept and support one another, encourage each other's spiritual growth and drawing the circle of their care ever-wider to include those in need both within the congregation and in the larger community.

Imagine a congregation filled with people who are enthusiastic, compassionate, generous and joyful, grounded in a history of truth-telling and justice-making, confident in what they stands for as they works to put their principles into action.

Imagine the people working on goals that bring their values to life:

- multigenerational social justice projects that involve the whole congregation
- programs for children, youth and adults that focus on UU's 7 principles
- community education projects (like voter registration)
- using their space that reach out to the community, strengthening our connections with the town and interfaith groups
- clarifying their message and finding ways to get that message out into the larger community (well placed literature, signs, symbols inside and out, spread our message through PR and marketing)
- developing decision-making processes that are inclusive and allow us to act in a more timely and responsive manner

Imagine walking among these people – what do you see? What do you hear? What's it like to be part of this congregation?

As you begin to feel what it would be like to belong to this congregation you realize that this is the congregation you belong to and these are the people that you belong to.

Now imagine running into a friend you haven't seen for a long time and getting into a conversation about this congregation; what people experience, what people value, what people do together. What the church stands for and what it's working to accomplish.

As you tell your friend about your congregation's goals it's as though they're already happening and you can see how the church has grown and become the congregation that you'd imagined and you can capture that image as a picture or a sound or a feeling.

Capture that image as a fragment that holds within it the seed of the vision you imagine, like a photograph captures an image of some event, or like a metaphor holds within it the truth of an image.

That image already exists — in the hearts and minds of the people who share your vision, your values. What will it take to realize that vision?