

Facilities Assessment

As you approach your church building, consider the following:

General Appearance

- Is the building well kept up or run down?
- Is it so immaculate that one would have to be careful?
- Is the door to the sanctuary or worship space clearly identified, in terms of the architecture?
- Can parents easily find the classrooms?
- If one is approaching the building or buildings during the week, is the entrance to the offices easy to locate?
- If the architecture does not delineate these features, are there ample signs to direct a newcomer to each place? And are they visible at night?
- Is there anything about the facility that conveys the congregation's identity as Unity?

Parking

- If you have a parking lot, is it ample for the numbers who use it on Sunday morning? Usually that means one space for every 2 adults in worship.
- If you depend on street parking, would a newcomer know where an overflow lot might be?
- Would individuals with limited mobility or the people driving them know where to park? Are there designated handicapped spaces?
- Are there designated guest spaces?
- Is there designated staff parking? Where is it in relation to guest spaces, and what does that say to guests about their importance to the church?

Exterior Signage

- Can people see your signs from the road? Are they lighted at night? Are they perpendicular to the street for better visibility?
- Are there signs directing persons to the church from the major road?
- Are signs up to date? Neat and clean?

As you enter your building, consider the following:

First Impressions

- Do you have a greeter who is welcoming and knowledgeable about the congregation?
- Is there a visitor's table to welcome guests? Do greeters and those who staff the welcome table represent a variety of ages and ethnicities so a newcomer might see a peer? Are guests ushered into the sanctuary?
- What general message is conveyed by the decoration in the entryway or narthex?

Interior Signage and Welcome

- Are there signs directing people to restrooms?
- Are the restrooms clean, neat, and freshly painted? Are the restrooms user friendly in terms of having infant changing tables? Are they handicapped accessible? Is there a “family use” restroom?
- Is it clear where families with children should go? If there is a family/quiet room, is it clear where it is? Are guests with small children made aware of it?
- Is it clear where adaptive devices and related materials for people who have trouble seeing or hearing are located?
- Are there signs directing guests to where coffee is served, and are members offering to accompany them?

When navigating your facilities, consider the following:

Worship Area

- What does the space say about your particular congregation and its identity as Unity?
- What values and what culture are conveyed, and in what manner? For example, is there a generation or a cultural group that would feel most comfortable here? Least comfortable?
- Which parts of your sanctuary or worship area are fully accessible to people with various disabilities?

Children’s Education Space

- What is conveyed by each space? Do children feel welcome here?
- What culture and values do the spaces convey? Is there enough room for their age and activity level? Can children and adults tell what goes on here by looking?
- How high are the bulletin boards and other items displayed?
- How clean and well cared for is the space?
- What sanitation procedures are in place?
- Is the space accessible for children with physical disabilities?
- Is it safe for the particular age group and for younger children who might wander in?

Adult Meeting Space

- Are there spaces for meetings and other types of adult education events?
- How flexible is the space for a range of activities and group sizes?
- Is the space neat, clean, and attractive?
- What culture and values are conveyed?
- Is it accessible to people with various disabilities?

Social Space

- What is the general ambiance of this space? Is it accessible to people with various disabilities?
- What is the culture conveyed by this space?
- How comfortable is the space, and for what kinds of activities?
- If there is a kitchen, how clean is it, and is it compliant with local health department codes?
- Do you offer information about the variety of activities available for people of all ages?

Office Space

- To whom is office space allocated, and what kind of space is allocated to them?
- How is it furnished—with new, secondhand, or castoff furnishings?
- What message is conveyed by this space?
- How up-to-date is the technology used in this space?

General Ambiance

- What is locked, and why? Who has access?
- Is there a flow from space to space, or are there areas where people bunch up?
- Is safety of people and property valued? Can you tell this by the space?
- Does the space and what is in it convey something about what the congregation values?
- Do the various spaces convey something about desired behavior?
- How is the congregation's current-self image conveyed?
- Who is welcome here, and how is that conveyed?
- Are there any artifacts that remain in evidence from another generation or time? If so, why? What is their significance? Has an actual decision been made about keeping these artifacts in place?

Adapted from www.uua.org, the website of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations.