

Subjective Responses to Additional Service Survey

(NOTE: Numbers in parentheses correlate to the number assigned to each completed survey, for future cross reference.)

Positive regarding an additional service:

- The only benefit I can foresee is reduction of parking problem. (87)
- If others, in different situations, feel a need for a second service, then we probably need to try that out, since we need to serve all members as best we can. (18)
- I hope you are successful. If I return to Athens after graduation, I would love to see either a contemporary or meditative service heavily led by guest ministers. I think this is a hard transition to make, but I just realized we are running out of space in the building. What a great problem to have! (10)
- I understand the need for a 2nd service. Last time, there was little attendance. I think people want to see their friends and especially children want to go to RE with their friends. I am usually involved in the service, so I'll be here whenever I need to. But if I were attending and had no reason to be at a particular service, I would rather come to an early service and have the rest of the day. (26)
- Every one of the several suburban Washington UU congregations has more than one service, most I believe with the same minister. Beats expanding the physical plant. (42)
- What will happen to after service gathering time? Could attract more people if it meets their time and interests. (55)
- If we had an additional service it might relieve parking problems if it were held on Sat – maybe Sunday RE classes would give parents an opportunity to go to a Sun AM service. (121)
- Benefits: (1) Opportunity for diversity in services, especially with lay led programs. Right now we have diverse topics, but the sermons all sound alike. (2) Two services, if scheduled appropriately, would likely alleviate some of the overcrowding. (1)
- An alternative service (maybe contemporary/soulful sundown) would reach out to others (teens, university students, and others that don't find what they need in the regular more traditional service styles). Evening or a midweek service would differentiate it as well! (66)

Negative concerning additional service:

- If not broke, don't fix! (46)
- I don't think the data show that we need another service at this time. (48)
- I do not see any reasons to add any additional services at the present time. (54)
- Do not feel an additional service is needed now. (35)
- I just don't see the need for another service right now. (3)
- I don't yet see the need for an additional service. The 11:00 am service is rarely full. I am not convinced (because of our previous experiment with an additional service) that an additional service will solve our RE and parking problems. (106)
- I feel an additional would serve to divide (and destroy) UUFA. (22)
- If 2nd service attracted seniors or singles it might help but just a 2nd service for families would require 2x number of RE teachers, wouldn't it? (51)
- We found ourselves stretched thin in our last attempt at having 2 services – both w/ leadership and finances. (116)
- I really don't see a need for another service until we consistently fill the “sanctuary” to 95% capacity. (104)
- I think we should examine why the previous attempt at 2 services was not successful. I fear our resources will be stretched too thin with 2 services. (24)
- Unless carefully planned could result in even more crowded conditions. Cannot be done successfully without additional support in many areas. (82)

- I don't think "overcrowding" currently is a problem. When it is a problem it probably would solve itself. (80)
- I am concerned that we only have overflow crowds on a few days during the year. (85)
- I see a very small chance of raising the required additional funding necessary, especially with the \$ shortfall caused by Weight Watchers leaving. (32)
- Two services split the Fellowship. (65)
- We have been part of a UU group which had two services. It split the congregation as much as forum splits this congregation. (77)
- The greatest concern would be that this will split us into various groups and that both diversity and friendships might suffer. (110)
- For me personally, there is no need for a second service. UUFA is just about perfect the way it is! I love the services, the women's circles, and the wonderful people I've met here. I really like the "intimate" atmosphere that in my opinion comes from being a "mid-sized" congregation. It is nice to know the majority of people one meets in the fellowship hall, rather than feeling "lost" in a larger crowd of strangers (introvert speaking here). (18)
- The danger with two services is that the membership could fracture into two communities (or three, if the forum folks are already separate from those attend services). (13)
- If there were an additional service, I would miss seeing certain people, would wonder "What am I missing?" (121)
- I feel like there is already somewhat of a division in the fellowship – particularly between families with young children and those who are single, childless, older, etc. I'm afraid that an additional service may further divide us or that it may serve to make many of us strangers to one another. Growth is good, but I would like for as many faces as possible to be familiar to me and my children. (41)
- I think that two full services could be more of a problem than a benefit. More sound technicians might be required. (64)
- We should consider that we already have 2 services (forum & 11:00) that seem to be functioning well. Another service on the order of the 11 o'clock would be too similar and probably fail. (28)
- Negative impact: (1) Existing time slots would need to be adjusted, and there might be a lot of resistance to this proposal. (2) Possible extra work for staff and choir. (3) Extra expenses? (1)
- Another service would place too heavy a burden on our finances, our minister, our RE staff, choir, and volunteers, and others who help with services in any way. (112)
- I'm not sure the fellowship is currently in need of a second service, though I like that we are exploring the idea. It's a tough call. Thanks to the committee for seeking our input. (103)

Facilities (including parking):

- I don't feel the Board has done enough to cut costs elsewhere and then add parking. (22)
- If overcrowding in RE & in the parking lot is the main motivation for possibly moving to 2 services, I think we should first try to solve those 2 problems. Cut a few trees in the back of the property – mill the wood and use it for chairs & tables – and create more safe parking (not along the road in a ditch). Divide up RE classes into smaller groups – create new spaces for those classes – use more volunteers to teach the larger RE classes. (3)
- Current parking problems require added land available be used, if necessary. (11)
- Our need is for more RE space and more parking. (106)
- I feel we need to look for ways to increase parking & R.E. space. (35)
- I would rather see (1) parking on Cheatham Road side of property, (2) Expansion of office wing (there is a sketch on the survey form), (3) more chairs in sanctuary. (105)
- Are biggest problems parking and RE? If so, finding more parking and building or buying classrooms might be less radical. (51)

- Baptists or Methodists would be thinking of a new Building Campaign. (51)
- It seems to me that the main purpose for considering an additional service is because of a lack of parking. There is space on the other side of the bldg. – albeit with trees that we love. But – not all the trees would need to be cut/cleared to create more parking. (116)
- If we can figure a way to alleviate shortage of parking, that would solve major concerns. (104)
- My experience of this fellowship is that we are not crowded inside the building. What perhaps could be considered is simply additional parking. (98)
- I haven't noticed any overcrowding problems except for parking. (68)
- I don't see a need for additional service, if parking is expanded. (8)
- I favor the building of additional spaces on Rambling Road and occupying some of the forest sanctuary land and making a wide walking trail connecting the new parking area to the new main building. (32)
- Parking is the constraining factor. (47)
- We need more space in the sanctuary & more parking – these to me are the considerations for adding another service. (108)
- I think the parking is more of an issue than having two services. (77)
- Parking is a bigger problem than seating. By purchasing more seating for the Fellowship sanctuary this problem could be solved for our existing congregation. (36)
- We should build a simple additional space for RE. (112)

RE:

- We need to add more R.E. rooms, and a prof. trained certified Dir. Of R. E. (11)
- Rel. Ed is vital to long-term growth of UUFA. (11)
- Would people have to commit to a particular service so # of kids in RE class would be stable? (51)
- This may not require children's RE but may need baby sitting or a reduced # of RE class offerings combining several age classes. (123)
- Inasmuch as purported overcrowding of RE was a main factor driving this survey project, accurate RE attendance records should be a necessary prerequisite. (32)
- I think it would be nice to move RE during the forum time to allow RE volunteers to be a part of the service. (66)

Financial:

- An additional service is justified only if it increases membership & pledges. (45)
- We are already having budget problems. Why make things worse by trying to add an additional 34d service? (96)
- We can't AFFORD an additional service. (99)
- UUFA's most pressing concern is a chronic budget deficit. Expansion of any kind should be delayed until that is resolved. (117)
- UU needs to be more effective at getting people to pledge and give. This issue is not unrelated to this survey. Rather, I see it as central. (We pledge and meet the pledge, which is why I was honest and said "No" to question #3 above.) (36)

Suggestions for an additional service:

- An additional service could focus on new folks with members together sort of like a mentoring emphasis. (70)
- If two services are decided upon I suggest coffee hour be held between the two services so congregants can see one another. (77)
- 2nd service should be the least burden on already over committed staff (minister and office). (123)

- Possibly family oriented with child care and RE. “Other” with no RE, just childcare or maybe no child care. (20)
- My ideal service would take place at 8:30 AM. In it, Terre would deliver her sermon and then there would be a discussion of it. This would also help her when she re-delivers the sermon at 11 AM. I love Albie’s music and would it at the earlier service; however, if she were unable to do this, some recorded peaceful music or pre-recorded music by Albie would be nice. My top priorities would be: (1) Terre’s sermons, which I adore; (2) a discussion of her sermon, which the smaller congregation would allow and make intimate, enjoyable; (3) great music – live (Albie) or recorded. (38)
- It would be great to have a service that stresses the principles of political and social action with UU historical stories, ethical debates and discussion, planning and implementation of social action. (78)
- If called a “service” rather than a forum, although less formal than the traditional one – perhaps with no “sermon” – we might appeal to a broader group of people, including those who do not attend church now. (89)
- Love the current service. Some variety might help those presenting. (114)
- I would like to see at least two services per month devoted to a full-blown exploration of a serious moral/spiritual/social issue or viewpoint – with a minimum of ritual. Some of these might be panel discussions led by a moderator. (64)
- I think the service should be earlier. Hard to miss lunch for our young kids. Could RE start at 9:30, go to 10:30, service at 10:30 to 11:30, while kids have child care. That is how our service was structured in College Station, TX. (60)
- I did not like the meditative services offered a few years ago. Also, there still needs to be activities for children during all the services so parents can participate in services. (59)
- Would have 2 services only when the topic or day would lead one to expect a “very full house.” Maybe once a month, a first. (57)
- I would appreciate an abbreviated service of perhaps half an hour that would include the sermon from the 11:00 service as the primary element. Recorded music could be used. The service could be at 8:45 or 9 am in the sanctuary, followed by the forum. (52)
- Very limited service. (84)
- I think the service should take place earlier. People seem to leave quickly rather than linger, probably because they are hungry. A moment of greeting the people around you during the service is a good way for people to connect. (16)
- A second service was tried many years ago in the form of a vesper service with a short “sermon.” I attended with less than a dozen others. Very poorly attended. Service was held Sunday evenings. (49)
- We should move the 11 am service to 11:15 or 11:30 to alleviate parking problems. (112)
- What about moving children’s RE to before the service. During the service child care could be provided and older children attend the service. Forum could be after the service, with snacks available for purchase after the service. Spread the people out time wise in a different way. You could have some adult RE during children’s RE. (119)
- (1) Soulful Sundown format; (2) 2nd service to target youth and young adults; (3) 2nd service family focused; (4) identify the needs of those who come only occasionally, where Sunday Service does not meet their needs & target this underserved group. (40)
- With the short time I have been attending, it seems as if there are many members but few attending regularly. I would try to determine why & see if they would attend at a different time or come to a different type service. I help with RE but not full-time as I don’t want to miss the service. I’d say either make an earlier child and adult service to encourage families to help with RE & still allow them to attend service. For older children (5th grade up), I think they could attend the service & find it interesting & strengthening. (21)

- I attended a few of the previously tried “meditative services” and I really enjoyed them. I know attendance waned at these. Perhaps a second service could alternate meditative services with lay led “forum-like” services, or even combine elements of both. (103)
- For one or two services, sermons need to be more concise; they often ramble. (13)
- Notes based on my experiences in Urbana, IL, where a second service was added (earlier Sunday) due to crowding: (1) The earlier service was popular with people who wanted to “get stuff done” on Sundays before noon; (2) The format was more intimate, due to the smaller numbers; (3) There was some loss of community, because some people never saw each other anymore; (4) Timing of the 2 services and the forum/discussion group is important for people who want to attend 2 or more events; (5) The 1st service has a “social time” afterwards as did the second service. Perhaps a “joint social time” between would be best to encourage mixing of the groups. (124)

General suggestions (not necessarily related to an additional service or any services):

- Because of the rapid growth of the congregation, it may be necessary in the future to consider having part of the congregation hive off to start another fellowship say in Oconee County or such. I worry that our congregation will become so large that we will lose one of the greatest appeals we have, the intimacy we share by having a small group. I, for one, find it difficult to attend because of the feeling I get that I’m very much an outsider and feel a bit lost. As one with a small child, I cannot attend things that either do not supply childcare (with or without a fee) or include children. If we wish to be truly inviting to families, there need to be ways to reach families, not just one part or other. (74)
- UUFA is a vibrant congregation but leans heavily towards the “gray” element. I would love to see younger people scattered throughout leadership roles. (69)
- Perhaps a series of covenant groups designed to discuss ethical questions, moral issues and current concerns of the day. Sunday evening or another “vacant” evening (Not Wednesday) might prove a good time. (28)
- Why do we have to wait for a questionnaire in order to air grievances, make suggestions, etc? We should have regularly scheduled Town Hall meetings with open discussion on a variety of issues that both concern and affect the congregation. (1)
- I want the Fellowship to grow and to continue and increase its presence in Athens. However, we expect to be moving away and I do not feel that I shall be participating much in this process. (34)

Out reach to UGA students, young adults:

- Outreach to UGA students. Singles night, newspaper announcements of special events (services) especially for these or other groups. (5)
- I think it’s very important to reach out to UGA undergraduates. We used to meet on campus, but not that many came. (I was one of the advisers.) I think having a service to attract them would be great. Then if there is enough interest and momentum, the kids might prefer a campus site as well. (50)
- I think there is a need to reach out to the 18-30 year old age range with more contemporary & challenging services. (63)
- An additional service should focus on the needs of young adults. This would primarily be college-age youth who need a spiritual alternative to fundamentalist Christian beliefs. The service could be a combination of time for discussion and need for social action and time for contemplation. (101)
- Needed: A Service for young adults (with & without children). (123)

Minister:

- I think there is a need to have a different ministerial voice. (63)
- I’m worried about the extra work-stress on the minister. (43)
- Would love to see us grow. Feel we may need a different minister to do so. (115)

Forum:

- Would prefer a service, if added, not be at the same time as forum. (Forum is a service.) (12)
- I am concerned that forum not get lost in the shuffle here. There are 2 services now – this is about a 3rd service but I hope forum will be unaffected by any decisions. (53)
- The forum works the way it is. To substitute another service for it—or to move the time would have negative effects. (70)
- Changing forum time might help with parking. (51)

Political atmosphere:

- There needs to be less emphasis on liberal politics in the Fellowship. This is very alienating to some members. It also shows a lack of respect for diversity which we “profess” to believe. This has resulted in a decrease in pledging and in bequests. I believe this issue should be taken seriously. (95)

Other:

- If a second service were to be tape recorded for those interested in either service replays, I could not continue making service recordings. Or if the recordings were only of the sermons that I could do on one tape of that date. (92 – Dave)

The following memo was sent by Richard Anderson (94) to the Task Force on August 28, 2006:

“As a long time member of the UUFA I am always pleased when a volunteer group of members studies how to improve or develop the Fellowship. Thank you. I am unable to complete the Survey Form in a satisfactory manner to myself because of the lack of information I possess. Some parts of the Survey are of the “I want” nature, rather than having any facts presented upon which to base one’s wishes. Therefore several questions are not answered well. One can critique that which is currently provided, but without any evidence or rationale for adding services it makes it impossible to make a case for adding new services on Sunday.

Most importantly, there are two ends of a continuum of religious thought within the membership.

a. The often older, humanistic oriented members who require a non traditional Sunday morning meeting that some would not describe as a religious service. These people will not usually attend a traditionally structured Sunday service.

b. The members who require a very traditional Sunday service in the Protestant tradition, with reference to a broader religious base than the customary Protestant Church provides.

A question that comes to my mind, but NOT on the Survey or intended by the Survey is, “Should one point of view prevail over the other in our Fellowship?” I do not have any evidence that this is so, but there is no evidence presented that it isn’t so, either.

This is a part of any discussion of adding Sunday services, whether the Committee intends it or not, particularly when no reasons are provided for needing another Service.

In the first few years of the Fellowship being in the present building I chaired the Long Range Planning Committee. At that time, a five year set of charts was developed with a history of the number of members each year, mean and median size of pledges, number of pledges and pledging units, as well as the total amount pledge. If these charts have been maintained, there would be a history of information about whether or not the Fellowship would need more services (based on member numbers) and also the nature of the expected income that could be utilized in the future. Time lines could be extended with a considerable degree of certainty.

Again, there is no data upon which to make a judgment other than “I wish.”

Thank you for reading my comments.”