Follen Church Long Term Planning Team Charter
Approved by Parish Board June 12, 2023

Planning is conversation because it is truly dialogue.
People explore their differences and their perceptions.
People risk saying what they believe to be important.
The talk is full of stories, memories, and hopes —
the kind of conversation that strengthens and transforms people.
from Holy Conversations, by Gil Rendle and Alice Mann

The Bylaws of Follen Church require a periodic “long-range plan” to guide our annual and longer term governance and decision-making. The last plans were adopted in 2009 and 2015. Parish Board has invited a team of creative, thoughtful, and committed members to lead development of a long-range plan for Follen Church, to be approved at the May 2024 Annual Meeting. The members of the team are Follen members Brian Cali, Jane Spickett, Jose Trevejo, Julianna Stockton, Kyle Johnson and Margot Tracy. This charter document sets forth the general parameters of the project.

1. During the 2023–2024 church year, the team will engage the congregation in a process of discernment and dialogue to consider important fundamental questions, for example: Who are we as a faith community? What does our faith call us to do? What is Follen’s context — social, economic, political, and geographic (real and virtual)?

2. Parish Board is not prescribing a particular structure, process, or methodology that the team must follow, based on our appreciation of the discernment options that Gil Rendle and Alice Mann describe in their book Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations. We urge the team to use this book, applying a UU perspective, to create a discernment process that works best for the team and for Follen at this moment in our history. The team is free to utilize additional or other sources to inform its work.

3. The team will have freedom to create the process, frame questions to consider, provide opportunities for discussion and discernment within the congregation, and determine the content and form of the plan to be approved at Annual Meeting in May 2024. The team will decide how best to conduct this inquiry.
4. The team will determine its own structure, and may designate a chair or co-chairs. The team may form sub-teams or project groups to help with the project, including other friends, members and staff of the church, as the team deems appropriate.

5. The team may seek whatever support they deem necessary from Parish Board, Program Council, Rev. Claire, staff and individual members of the church, who pledge to share their gifts of spiritual thoughtfulness, facilitation, conversation, exploration, hospitality, and artistic expression.

6. Parish Board members Anne Kelly and Steve Tenhor (or other members of Parish Board designated by the Chair of Parish Board) will serve as liaisons between the team and Parish Board. The team will provide regular reports on project progress and support needs to Anne and Steve. At a minimum, the team will provide a verbal or written report at each monthly meeting of Parish Board, either directly or through Anne and Steve.

**Tentative Timeline & Tasks**

**Summer, 2023**
- Team project planning meeting
- Background reading
- Review of past long-term plans

**Fall, 2023**
- Team project planning meetings
- Development of key questions / data gathering strategy

**Winter, 2024**
- Facilitated small group conversations (e.g. “vision circles”)
- Review of data/input from conversations

**Spring, 2024**
- Development of DRAFT report/vision/plan document
- Presentation of DRAFT for feedback by congregation, Coordinating Team, Parish Board and Program Council

**May 2024 - Adoption of report/vision/plan at Annual Meeting**
Some Resources


2015 Follen Long-Range Plan

2009 Follen Long-Range Plan
