

Report from Congregational Services to the UUA Board of Trustees

December 2006

Rev. Dr. Tracey Robinson-Harris, Director for Congregational Services

This is an exciting time! This report offers brief highlights of several initiatives and two more detailed reports prepared by Valerie Holton, Marketing Outreach Director: a summary of marketing outreach in St. Louis and an interim report on marketing outreach in Orange County/South Bay.

I will be meeting with the Growth Working Group to provide more detailed updates as requested and with the Congregations Working Group for a conversation on Restorative Justice along with the Rev. Jory Agate, Chair of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee.

Among the initiatives in support of our congregations and their health, growth and vitality are:

A partnership among the Liberal Religious Educators Association, the New England Adolescent Research Institute and the UUA to develop an on line safe congregations training for religious professionals and congregational lay leaders

Spiritually Vital and Alive: A conference focusing on Contemporary Worship sponsored by the Young Adult and Campus Ministry Office. This conference will take place Feb. 22-24, 2007 and is being hosted by the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego. Information is available on line at http://www.uua.org/news/congpacket/dec2006/yacm_worship_reg.pdf

The upcoming publication of Forward Through the Ages, a new resource on stewardship written by Wayne Clark and a demonstration project that will allow Wayne and the Congregational Fundraising Consultants to learn even more about how this resource can be used to support the financial health and well being of our congregations. Information is available on line at <http://www.uua.org/cde/fundraising/forth.html>

The beginnings of strategic marketing conversations to explore what might be possible beyond regional marketing efforts and special opportunities such as Times Square

Now Is The Time: Leading Congregations into a Multiracial, Multicultural Future – a conference intended to bring anti racism, anti oppression, multiculturalism home by focusing on congregational life and leadership through ARAOMC lenses. We are working on various options for the development of resources out of the conference. This conference will take place Feb. 16-18, 2007. Information is available on line at <http://www.uua.org/cde/nowisthetime2007/>

Support for the Pacific Southwest District in the development of a multi site congregation and for the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Albuquerque in their Branches Project - development of 3-9 worshipping communities that will be part of First Church

Planning for Growth and Vitality

This is an established and acclaimed program delivered by trained teams of consultants and currently we seek to increase its efficacy. In midNovember, an exciting Planning for Growth (P4G)

consultants' retreat was held, with Alice Mann, Senior Consultant with The Alban Institute joining us, as we are expanding this workshop program to include consulting for congregations. We are seeking sustainable change in congregations.

The program contains two workshops: one for small (150-), and one for smaller mid-size (150 – 350) congregations. In the past these have been offered to several congregational teams at a time, with each team completing pre-workshop assignments ahead of time and, at the end, a plan of post-workshop action. These practices will continue. A pilot is planned to test proposed changes, which include:

- more intentional selection of participant congregational teams,
- team selection with the help of a new, ongoing district-based growth mentor/consultant.
- the option for a smaller number of congregations to receive greater ongoing attention from the district and, if useful, remotely from the P4G consultants.
- larger teams from each congregation and longer term follow up should help them to reach the congregational growth tipping point more readily

At the recent annual Big Complex Meeting of District Staff in New Orleans, we talked about possibilities for partnerships with several of our districts in pilot projects using the revised program. We anticipate development of these possibilities continuing into the spring with the hope that we will have three pilot projects for FY08.

Large Congregations Staff Conference

The UUA-sponsored Large Congregations Staff Conference was November 6 to 8, 2006 hosted by the UU Congregation of Fairfax in Virginia. The theme "Building Effective Staff Teams," and provided an opportunity for the staffs of large congregations to share their specialist knowledge with one another and to learn more about best practice in congregations of this size from experienced consultants. The keynote speaker was Susan Beaumont, a senior consultant with The Alban Institute and a leading authority on congregational staffing and staff team building.

Philadelphia/Wilmington Regional Growth Strategy

The initial focus in the Philadelphia/Wilmington area strategy is the start up of the WellSprings congregation and support for the growth of the four congregations in that area – Main Line, Thomas Paine, Westchester, and Pottstown.

In brief:

- ✓ WellSprings held their first major public event on November 11. Marketing outreach inviting the community to hear Elizabeth Lesser, a founder of Omega Institute, resulted in between 160-175 folks gathering with approximately 140-145 new contacts for WellSprings. Elizabeth did a fine job of including comments about the importance of religious community to personal faith development. And the WellSprings staff did a fine job of on site hospitality; including opening and closing remarks by Rev. Ken Beldon and offering an incentive to folks to provide contact information (if they did so they were entered in a gift give away with winners names drawn on the spot- and the fun and enthusiasm this generated were great!). This event was held in the space that has been rented for worship at the

Montgomery School. The next major event is the first public worship service scheduled for the third Sunday in January – with “under the radar” worship services being offered for those already part of the WellSprings community and as part of their preparation for launch.

- ✓ Tom Chulak continues to provide growth consultation to the five congregations with the focus at this time on Thomas Paine, Westchester and Pottstown. This support will continue through the FY07 year.
- ✓ We continue to explore possibilities for a five congregation cooperative marketing outreach campaign for fall 2007. Valerie Holton and I will be making a “drive the market” visit to the area in February.

Marketing Outreach: Uncommon Denomination

Covenanting Congregations

Currently there are 78 covenanting congregations in the Uncommon Denomination program. In November, these congregations were sent a mailing of a set of samples of our marketing materials including the three available postcards, an Orange County campaign postcard (for which they can order the art work, free of charge, to produce their own card), and an Orange County campaign newspaper insert.

One covenanting congregation, the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert in Rancho Mirage, California developed a \$15,000.00 marketing budget for this fall. Based upon the strong performance of radio in Kansas City, they plan on using targeted radio, selected magazines and some limited newspaper ads (using the "Imagine a religion..." series of print ads.) Earlier this fall they completed production of three radio spots, using scripts written for the congregation, produced for them by Famous Radio Ranch, an award winning commercial production house.

Summary: St. Louis Marketing Campaign

Prepared by Valerie Holton

In June 2005, the UUA supported GA with an advertising campaign. Goals for the campaign were:

- Generate “brand awareness” of Unitarian Universalism in St. Louis
- Create excitement and pride for UUA GA attendees visiting St. Louis
- Invite visitors to the GA Sunday Service

The media buy included:

- Bus Shelter Ads: four key downtown locations around the hotels, convention center and a major traffic artery into the city.
- MetroLink Interior Ads: 100 interior cards on eighty trains (9” x 18”), two weeks
- KWMU NPR Radio: 60 15- second spots in June.
- St. Louis Post Dispatch Newspaper: One ad (3 column x 8”) in the main section of the paper Thursday June 22nd, with an invitation to attend the GA Sunday service. The four St. Louis congregations were listed in the newspaper ad.
- The Vital Voice: GLBT newspaper, June issue.

The June campaign cost ~\$8,000.

The UUA provided a phase II campaign in September to support the back-to-church season. The objectives of phase II were:

- Brand Awareness of Unitarian Universalism in St. Louis
- Increase visitor attendance at the UU congregations in St. Louis
- Increase membership in the congregations

The media strategy for the September campaign included:

- Insert in Paper. 137,000 4- page, four color flyers in 55 zip codes (as determined by the congregations) were inserted in the St. Louis Post Dispatch on Thursday, September 21st.
- KWMU NPR Radio. 30 spots in September.

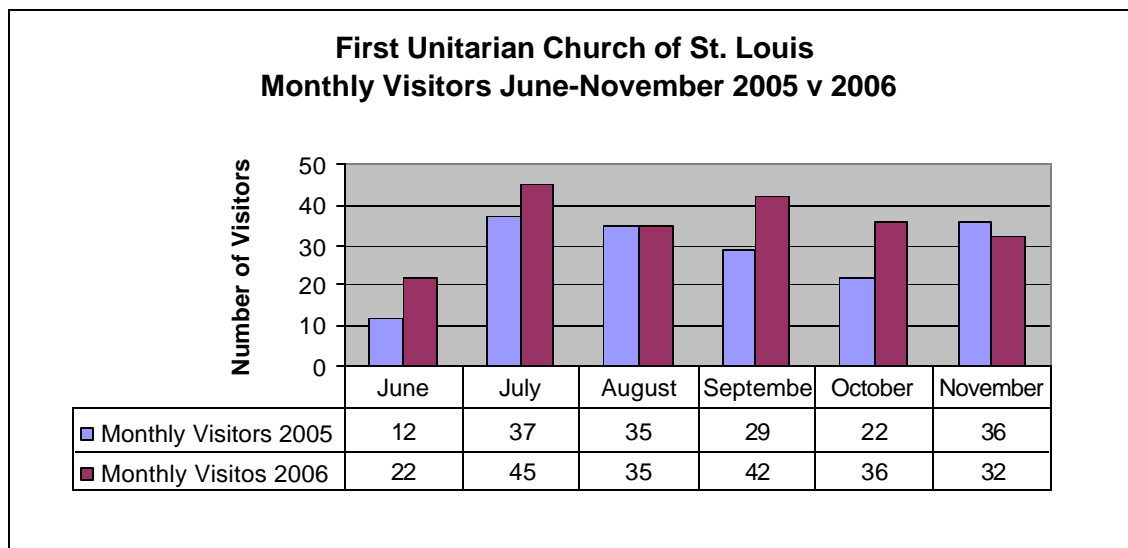
The fall campaign's budget was ~10,000

Results

First Unitarian Church of St. Louis

- First Unitarian had a 24% increase in visitors from June-November 2005 versus 2006

MONTH/YEAR	2005	2006	% change
June	12	22	83
July	37	45	22
August	35	35	0
September	29	42	45
October	22	36	63
November	36	32	-11
TOTAL	171	212	24



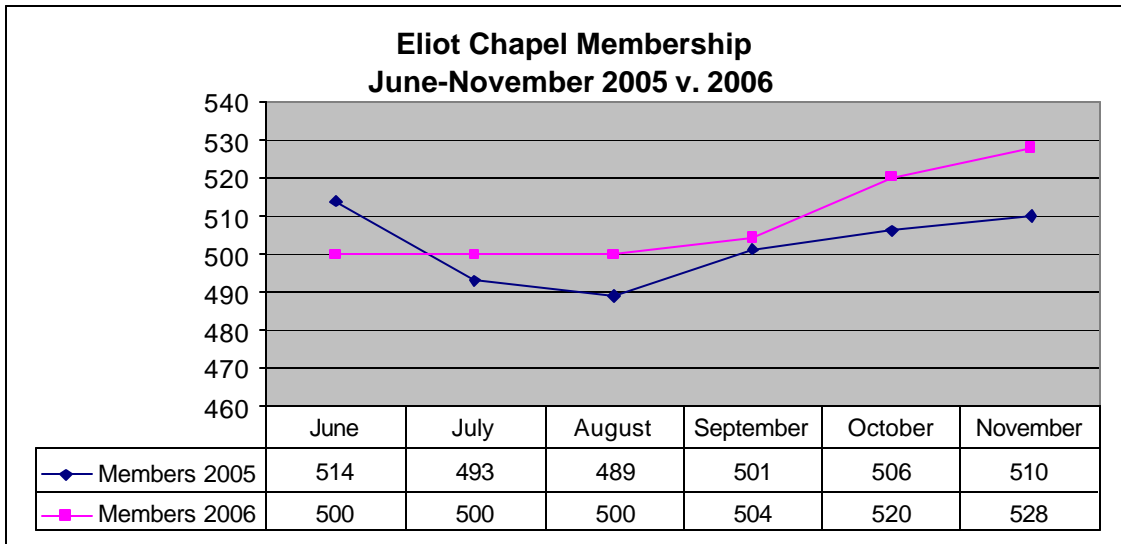
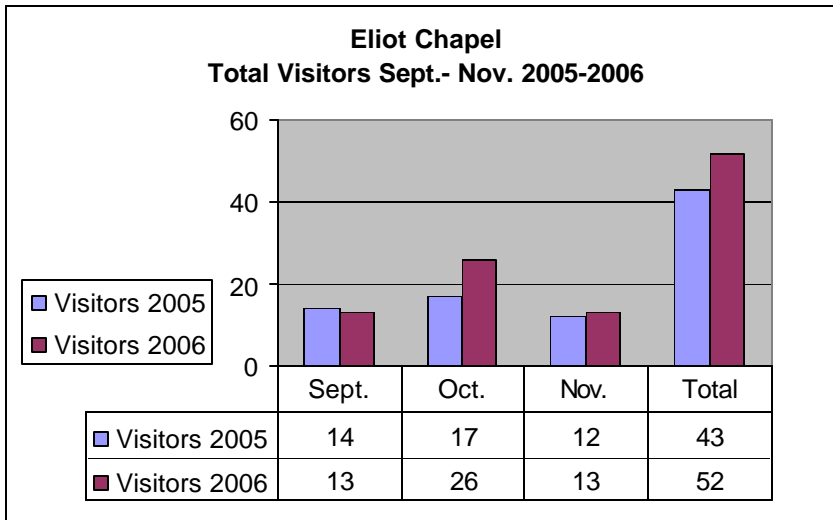
- Total Attendance June – November 2005 v. 2006 decreased 9% from 4,751 to 4,325

First Unitarian, Alton Illinois

- Visitor attendance increased 10%, June – October 2005 v. 2006
- Total attendance (adult & children) increased 51% from June – October 2005 v. 2006

Eliot Chapel, Kirkwood, Missouri

- 3% increase in attendance September- November 2005 v. 2006
- 21% increase in visitors, September – November 2005 v. 2006
- Membership has increased steadily over the last six months and is 3.5% higher than a year ago (November 2005 v. 2006).



Emerson Unitarian Universalist Chapel, Ellisville, Missouri: No Report

Interim Report: UU Advertising Campaign - Orange County, South Bay, Long Beach
Prepared by Valerie Holton, Marketing Outreach Director, UUA

Background Information

In the spring of 2005, lay leaders representing seven congregations in the Orange County, Long Beach and South Bay areas of “Southern California” met with the Stewardship & Development Group of the UUA. They created a regional Round Table with the objective of collectively funding a project that would support Unitarian Universalism. It was decided that they wanted to increase their outreach efforts through an advertising campaign. With the assistance of the UUA Stewardship & Development Group the Round Table participants committed to raising \$100,000 for an advertising campaign. The original plans were to conduct an advertising campaign in January 2006. In August 2005 Hurricane Katrina caused the UUA and the congregations to rethink the timing of the campaign and a new date was set for the fall of 2006.

Goals and Objectives

1. Generate brand awareness of Unitarian Universalism
2. Increase visitor attendance at local congregations
3. Increase membership
4. Create excitement and pride among Unitarian Universalists in the area
5. Build a sense of UU community among the seven participating congregations

Historical Data

The seven congregations involved in the campaign are listed below. All have experienced strong growth, as indicated in the chart. Overall, the congregations have experienced a 21% five year growth and an 11% one year growth.

Congregation	Feb. 2000	Feb. 2001	Feb. 2002	Feb. 2003	Feb. 2004	Feb. 2005	Feb. 2006	% Change Five Year 2002 v. 2006	% Change 2005 v. 2006
Orange Coast UU Church	200	209	224	241	239	233	249	11%	7%
Pacific Unitarian Church, Rancho Palos Verdes	220	220	220	225	208	208	252	15%	21%
Tapestry A UU Congregation	87	85	105	112	130	142	155	48%	9%
UU Church in Anaheim	40	44	41	33	36	41	48	17%	17%
UU Church in Fullerton	110	113	125	124	120	124	137	10%	10%
UU Church in Long Beach	241	243	245	250	276	261	279	14%	7%
UU Fellowship Laguna Beach	64	54	75	106	121	119	136	81%	14%
TOTAL	962	968	1035	1091	1130	1128	1256	21%	11%

Campaign Highlights

Fund-Raising: Funds were locally raised through the support of the Stewardship & Development Staff of the UUA in concert with local congregational volunteers. Donors were selected based on the recommendation of the ministers and lay-leaders as well as UUA donor knowledge. Fifty-five donors contributed \$97,000 to the campaign.

Pre-preparation: Congregations were asked to conduct a “needs assessment” and sign a covenant. Two workshops were conducted over a 12 month period. In October 2005, Ken Brown, District Executive of the Pacific Southwest District, facilitated a greeting and “best practices” workshop. In August 2006 a membership workshop was conducted. Chloe Mason Seagrove, Membership Director of All Souls Unitarian Church in Kansas City and Rev. Matt Tittle, Minister of the Bay Area Church in Houston co-facilitated the workshop.

Celebrations: Two inter-congregational celebrations were planned. A campaign kick-off party on Saturday September 16th was attended by over 150 local area UUs. On October 29th a UU Revival was held at the Westin Hotel, South Coast Plaza, Costa Mesa. Approximately 300 UUs attended that event. UUA President Bill Sinkford was the keynote speaker for both events.

Advertising

The following is a summary of the advertising campaign that ran September – October 2006 in which a mix of mass media and targeted media was used.

Radio

Seventy 30-second general service announcements were aired on KPCC (public radio, primarily news format), and KCRW (public radio, mixed programming). All the UU congregations in the LA media market benefited from these announcements. As a result the announcements mentioned “the 30 congregations in Southern California”. Ministers throughout the LA market area informed the UUA that they did experience an increase in visitors during the campaign and believe it was a result of the radio announcements. The radio schedule was:

WEEK OF:	STATION	NUMBER OF SPOTS
9/17/2006	KCRW	10
	KPCC	17
9/24/2006	KCRW	17
	KPCC	10
10/1/2006	KCRW	<u>16</u>
Total		70

Ten additional spots were aired the last week in October on KPCC to promote the UUA Revival.

Print Ads in Specialty Publications

Ads were placed in the following special interest publications:

- 1) The September and October Issues of BLADE Magazine - a 50,000 circulation monthly magazine serving the Gay, Lesbian, Bi-Sexual and Transgender community. 1/3 page ad.
- 2) South Bay Center: Monthly newsletter serving the GLBT community in the South Bay area of LA. ½ page ad
- 3) Dot Magazine: Monthly magazine serving the GLBT communities in LA, Long Beach, Orange County and San Diego markets. November issue: 1/3 page ad.
- 4) Southern Sierran - a classified ad ran in September's issue; a display ad (2" x 3") ran in both the October and November issues. Newsletter circulation: 50,000 Sierra Club members in Los Angeles and Orange Counties.
- 5) LA Times: Small ad (2" x 3"), three times October 27 & 28 in Orange County, and South East Zone, promoting UU Revival. Circulation - 660,000.

Direct Mail

160,000 oversized (6" x 11.5") postcards were mailed on Thursday, September 14th. A combination of several mailing lists were used to target households that would have a propensity to value the religious message of Unitarian Universalism. These households were within the top five zip codes that each congregation provided (35 zip codes total).

The lists include the following:

- New homeowners (approx. 30,000 households - People who had moved within the last 90 days). New residents are often looking for a new church.
- Affinity Groups (approximately 40,000 households). The UUA was able to buy specialty lists from organizations whose missions reflect Unitarian Universalist values. Lists include: Planned Parenthood, Sierra Club, Amnesty International, Anacapa Fund, etc.
- Demographic/Psychographic (life values) targets (approximately 90,000 households). Households were chosen that represented the cultural diversity of the market (specifically high Asian and Latino), and younger life stage (families with children) attributes.

Tabloid Insert in Local Newspapers

Approximately 550,000 4-page, 4-color flyers were inserted in the Sunday editions of the major newspapers. Inserts were distributed to 120 zip codes as determined by the congregations, in the following papers on the following dates:

PAPER	SUNDAY DATE	APPROX. CIRCULATION
LA Times	September 24	256,000
Orange County Register	October 1	200,000
Press Telegram	October 1	42,000
Daily Breeze	October 1	<u>49,000</u>
		547,000

Cost of Plan (approximate)

Media	Delivery	Approximate Costs
Radio	70 spots	\$25,400
Direct mail	160,000 households-one time	\$33,820
Inserts in Sunday papers (4-page/4 color)	537,000 circulation in Orange County, Long Beach & South Bay	\$33,700
Advertising in special interest publications		\$1,500
Creative Materials: Production		\$500
LA Times newspaper ads		\$770
EXPENDITURES		\$95,690

Public Relations Activities to Support Campaign

Two local UU volunteers with strong public relations expertise worked with the UUA's Communication Department to create press releases. The following newspapers covered the story of the advertising campaign.

- Two Laguna Beach weekly papers
- Peninsula News serving the Rancho Palos Verdes market area
- The LA Times ran a ½ page article in the full run of the paper on Saturday, October 29; circulation ~ 770,000
- Rev. John Millspaugh, a featured columnist in the Orange County Register, submitted several editorials during the campaign.

Measurable Results

Each congregation is compiling data. At this time the following information has been provided to the UUA for this report:

Pacific Unitarian, Rancho Palos Verdes:

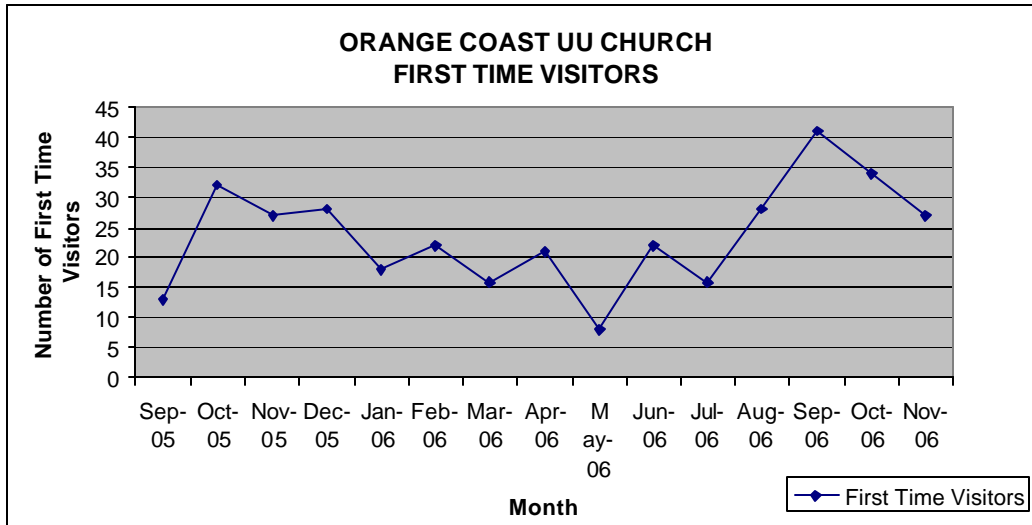
- 22% increase in visitors September – October 2006 v. 2005.
- 9 new members month of October 2006 ,
- 43 new members for the year as of October 2006, a 22% increase from January 2006.
- 50% increase in website visits in just one month.

Orange Coast Unitarian Church, Costa Mesa:

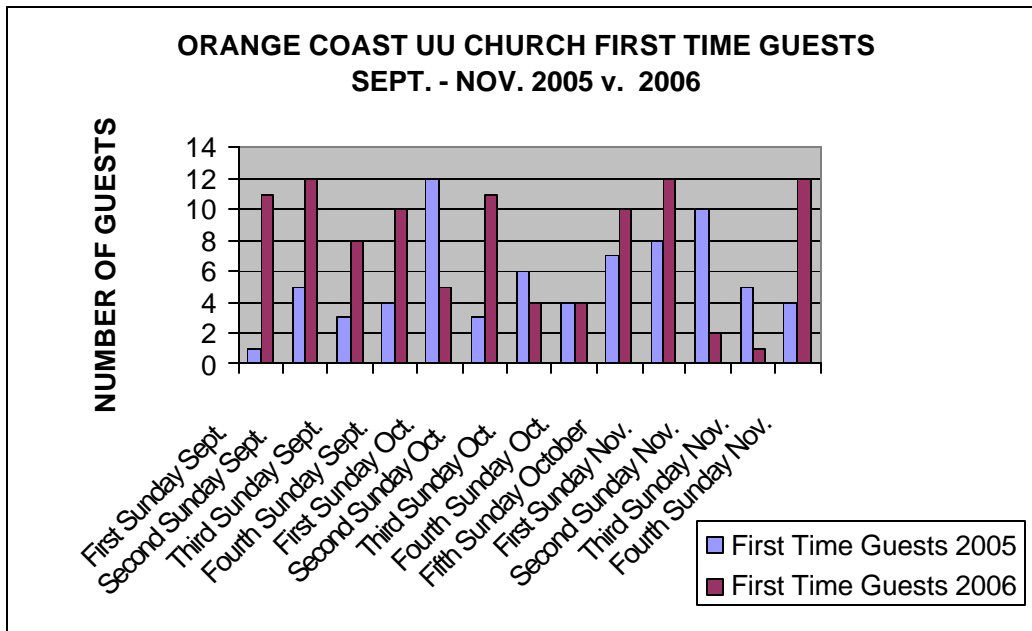
- 42% increase in first time visitors September – November 2006 v. 2005 (from 72 to 102).
- Highest recorded number of first time visitors - September 2006 (41 first time visitors)
- Data on first time and returning visitors:
 - Sept.-Nov. 2005: First time visitors: 72; returning visitors: 88. Ratio of returning to new 1.22
 - Sept.-Nov. 2006: First time visitors: 102; returning visitors: 86. Ratio of returning to new .85

- Current membership is 263, a 6% increase from Feb. 2006. This net growth is particularly significant because the congregation has lost several strong lay leaders to relocation

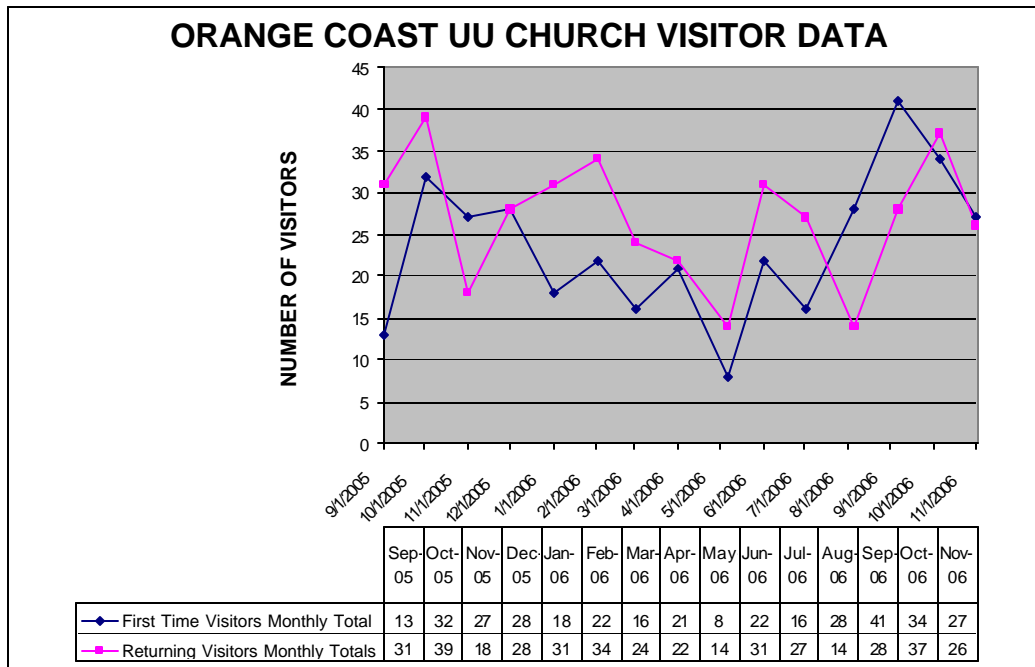
Monthly First Time Visitors, September 2005- November 2006:



Comparison of First Time Visitors, September through November 2005-2006:



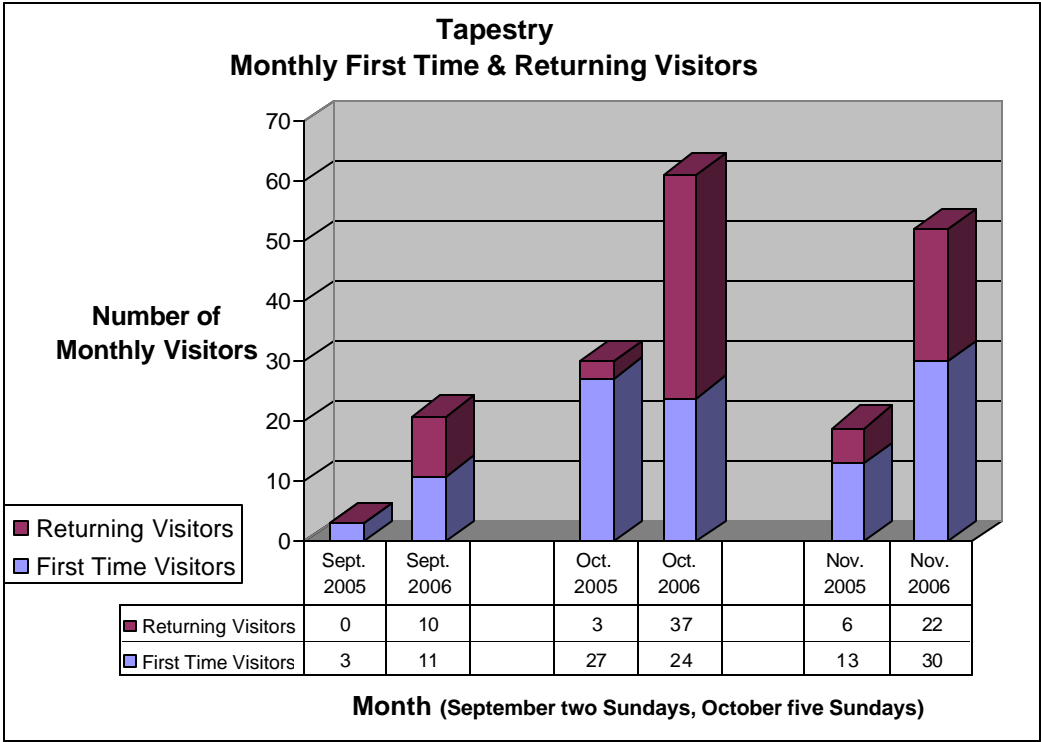
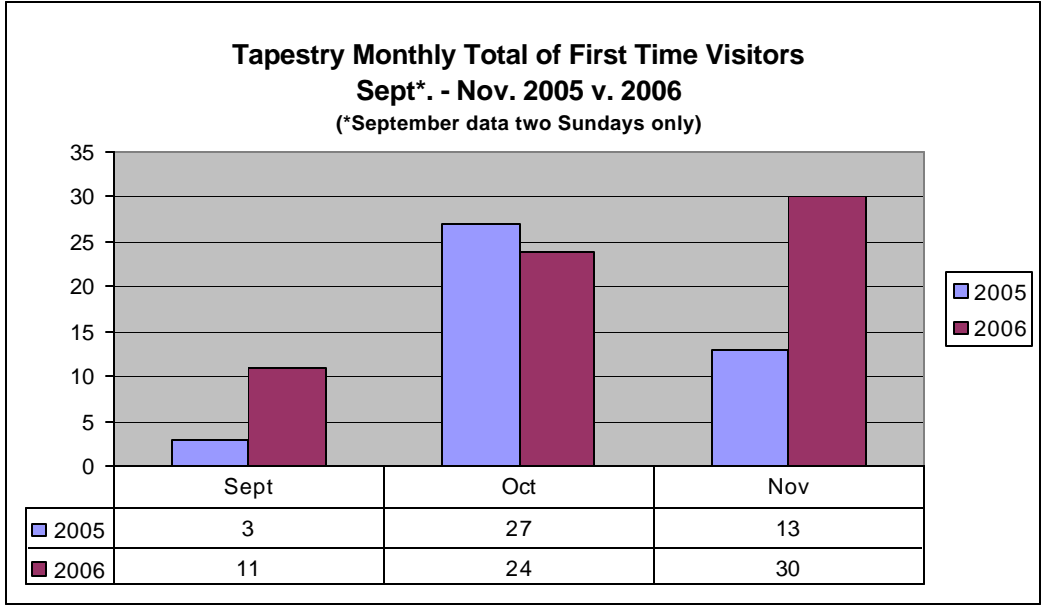
Pattern and Percentage of New and Returning Visitors



Tapestry – A Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Mission Viejo:

Tapestry is still compiling data. However, comparison data mid-September - November 2005 versus 2006 indicates:

- 51% increase in first time visitors from 43 in 2005 to 65 in 2006
- 165% increase in total visitor (first & returning) attendance
- A significant improvement in the number of returning visitors as a percentage of first visitors – a key indicator of potential membership growth.
 - In 2005, Tapestry had a total of 52 first time and returning visitors; 9 were returning representing 17% of the total
 - In 2006 Tapestry had a total of 138 first time and returning visitors; 69 or 50% were returning.



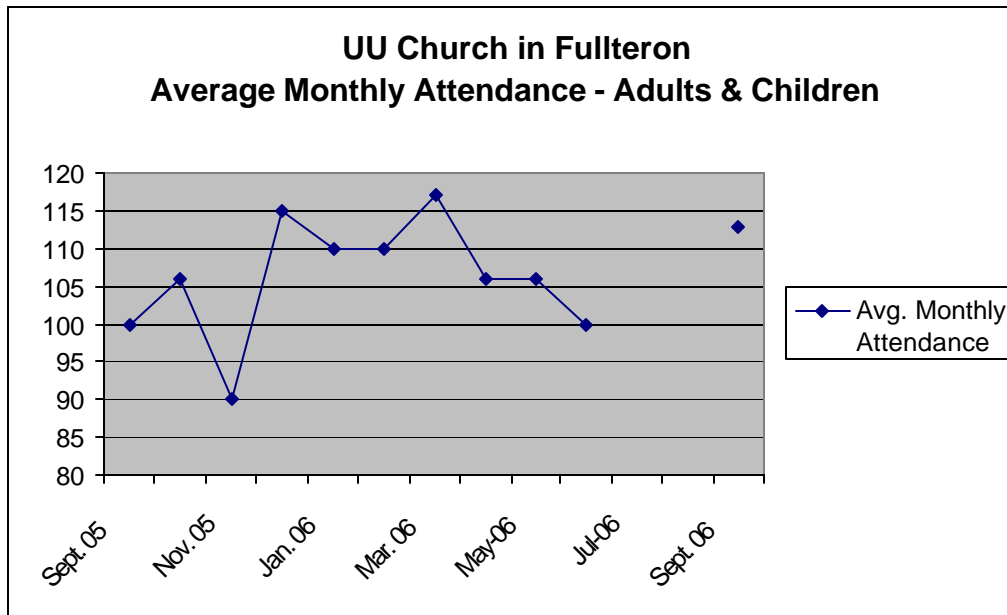
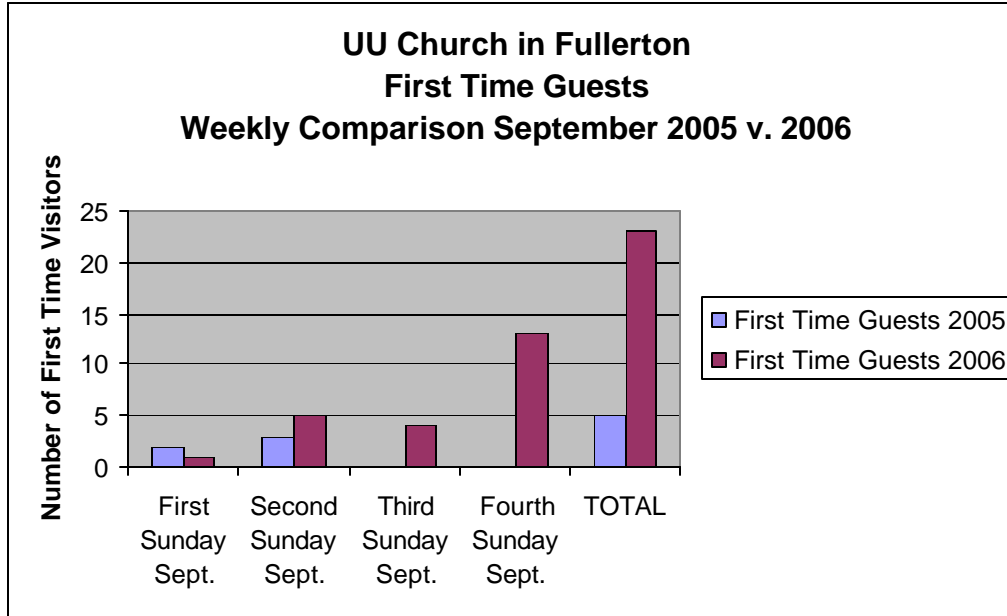
UU Church in Anaheim:

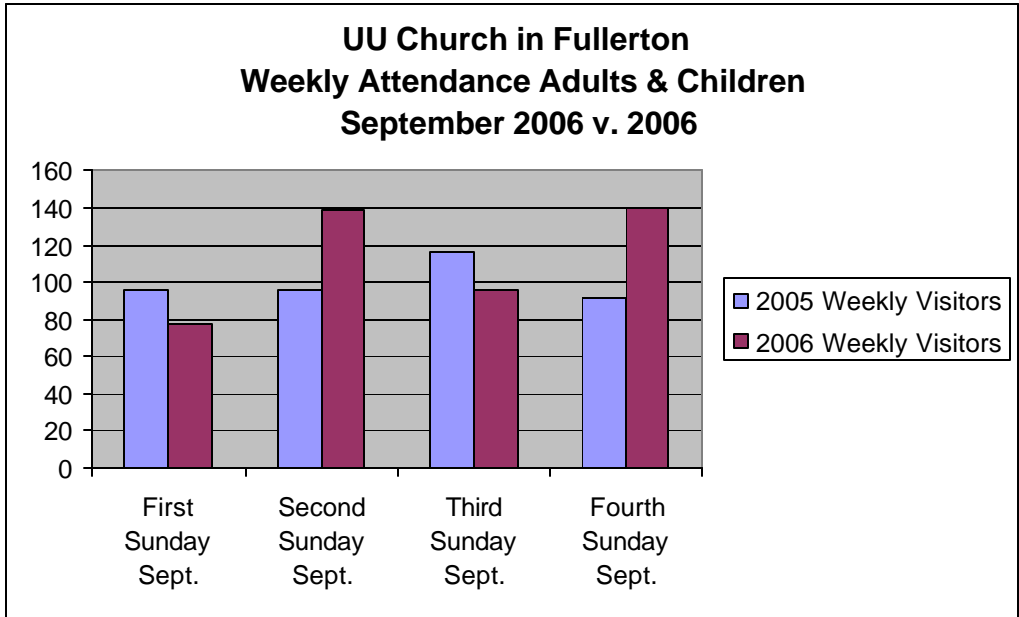
No data at this time provided

UU Church in Fullerton:

The Fullerton congregation has not provided complete 2006 data. However, the following are some statistics:

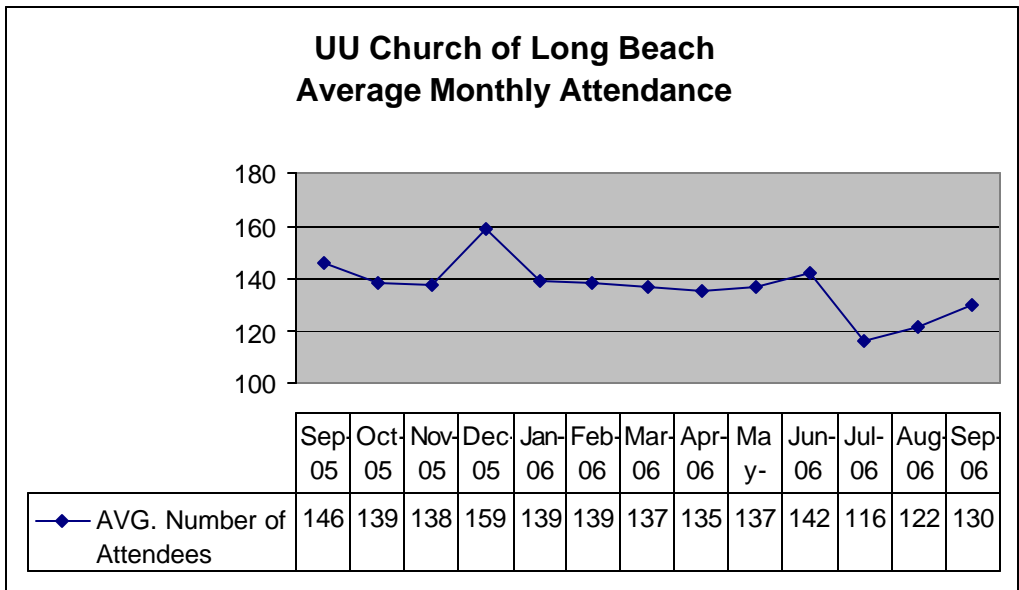
- First time visitors September 2005 v. 2006 increased 5 to 23, a 360% increase
- Monthly attendance was 13% higher, September 2005 v. 2006, from 400 to 453.



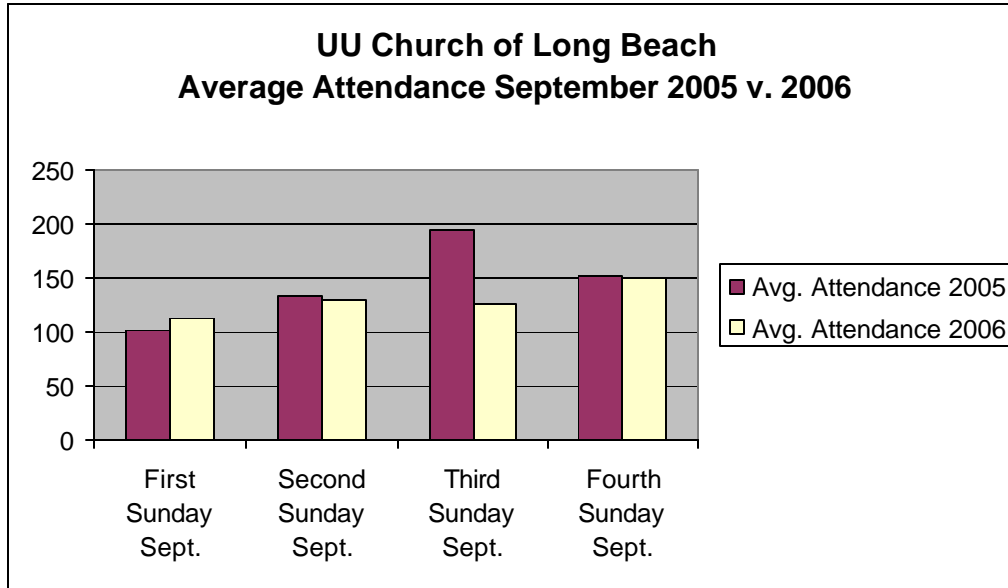


UU Church in Long Beach:

The Long Beach congregation is still compiling F all 2006 data. Below are monthly attendance statistics, September 2005 though September 2006. Attendance figures substantially declined July-September 2006. Rev. Marguerite Lovett was on sabbatical and this may have impacted attendance.



Comparative data between September 2005 and September 2006 shows higher average attendance in 2005. A total of 583 folks attended the Long Beach congregation in September 2005, as compared with 520 in 2006 – an 11% decline. Again, this may be the result of the Minister’s sabbatical.



UU Fellowship Laguna Beach:

Data related to the campaign has not been provided.

Membership has increased 7% from 136 to 146, December 2005 to July 2006.

Miscellaneous Remarks

Part of the success of the campaign includes the internal changes made by the congregations to improve their outreach and hospitality. Several of the congregations made significant improvements to their facilities, processes and procedures.

- Pacific Unitarian spent \$3,500 in the redesign of their website. They also improved their facilities, including new painting of their parking lot with visitor spaces clearly delineated and located close to the church building.
- The Long Beach congregation improved their website.
- Long Beach conducted a “clean up Sunday” prior to the campaign.
- Tapestry redesigned their welcoming and membership process, as well as their tracking and measurement processes - greatly impacting their visitor retention.
- Tapestry made significant improvements to their facility.

Closing

Sharing the good news of our faith through marketing is a ministry. Rev. John Morehouse shared this story at the annual President’s Council meeting in October 2006.

“.....the ultimate testimony to the campaign’s transformative nature can be summed up in one short story. About three weeks ago a lesbian couple showed up for our worship service. They had seen the insert in the LA Times. After the service they asked to speak to me and told me they wanted to have a union ceremony to bless their domestic partnership. Over the past few weeks I have been working with them on this. Just the other day, one partner stopped me after church and asked to speak to me. She told me that what I didn’t know was that her partner was dying of cancer. ‘You see’, she said, ‘while that is sad, it so wonderful we found this church. At least we will be blessed by this community, at least she won’t die before she knows that there is such a religion for us.’ We have a world waiting to be saved. This campaign was a brave step into that work.”