



OUUC 2025-26 Gather Grow and Guide Meeting Summary

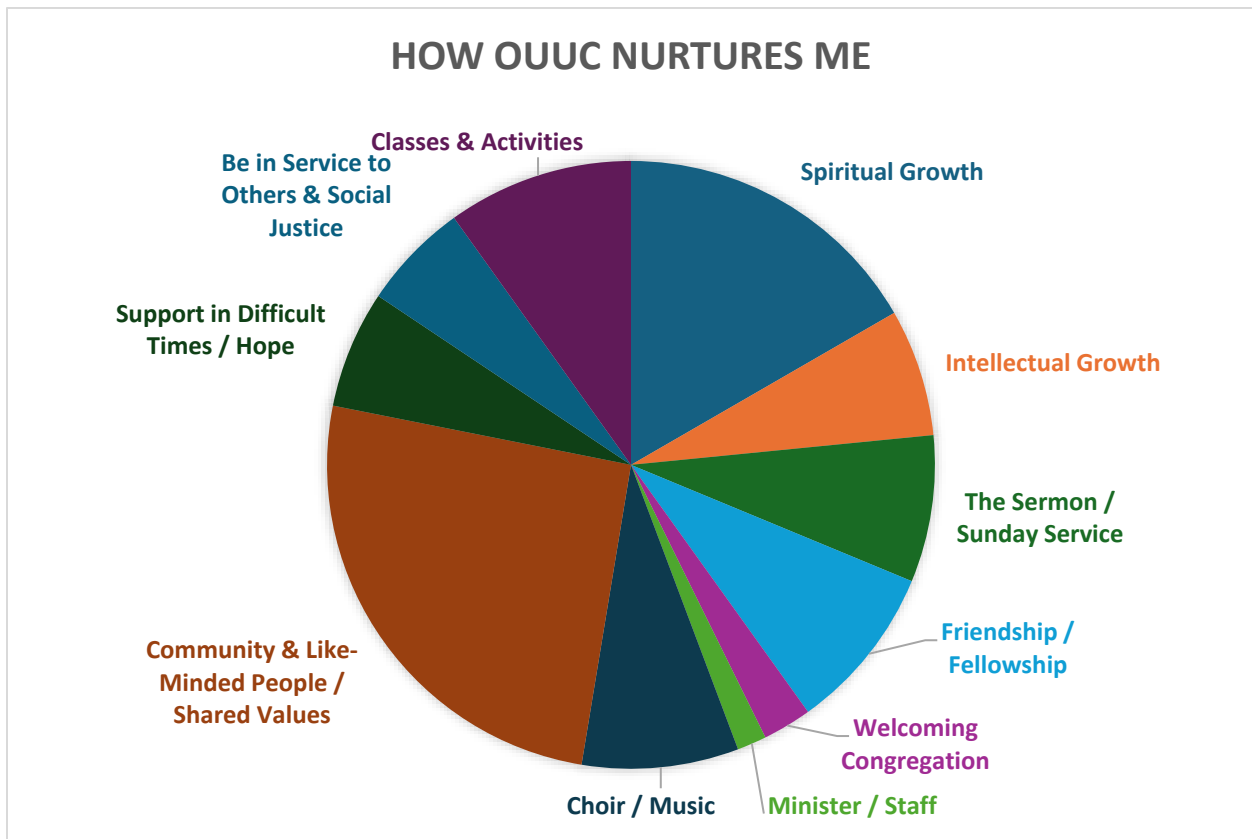
OVERVIEW:

In January 2025, The Stewardship Committee organized 11 Gather, Grow, and Guide Sessions as an opportunity for OUUC members and friends to gather and discuss the ways their participation in OUUC nurtures them and how they nurture OUUC. Approximately 130 people attended. Nine of the gatherings were held in member homes, one was held at church, and one was online via Zoom.

Members wrote the 'Ways OUUC Nurtures Me' and 'Ways I Nurture OUUC' on note cards for use in discussion. Facilitators collected the note cards from attendees and the comments were consolidated into a document. The comments were then organized into 'like' categories.

HOW OUUC NURTURES ME

Facilitators collected 87 comments about 'How OUUC Nurtures Me'. The discussion points fell into 12 categories, shown in the following chart:



Community & Like-Minded People / Shared Values: By far, the most important way that OUUC nurtures our members is through our existence, which provides the opportunity to gather with like-minded people with shared values. People appreciated the intergenerational membership and ability to get to know people that they wouldn't normally meet. People were inspired by kind, thoughtful, moral people who serve as role models. The social connections, volunteer opportunities and activities create a close-knit community that helps us feel that OUUC is 'more than the sum of its parts.' 49 comments fell in this category.

Spiritual Growth: 31 people wrote comments about the importance and value of the spiritual growth they receive at OUUC. There was an appreciation for the rituals, inspiration and solace, spiritual support, activities that support spiritual development, and a weekly centering and foundation for who to be in this world.

Classes & Activities: Activities supplement the Sunday service, provide a way for people to be involved in the congregation, develop friendships, enhance our spiritual life and intellectual development, and create community. People appreciated Thursday night dinner and activities, social justice actions, choir participation and the availability of online services/activities.

Friendship / Fellowship: While this category is related to the 'Community, Like-Minded People and Shared Values' topic, people frequently mentioned the individual friendships they made, appreciation for having people to socialize with, and the importance of being known to others. Involvement in OUUC prevents loneliness and gives people a spiritual home.

Choir / Music: People appreciated both participating in the choir and the inspiring music we listen to and sign along with. One person noted, 'Singing makes me happy and gives me energy!'

The Sermon / Sunday Service: Sunday mornings provide a touchstone for people's upcoming week. Members noted that services are inspiring, heartfelt, practical, meaningful, nourishing and thoughtful. They provide spiritual insight, important ceremony, and perspective during difficult times. Sunday mornings are a place to develop community and connection.

Be in Service to Others & Social Justice: OUUC provides the opportunity for members to work for peace and justice. It challenges us to use our voice and skills for the benefit of the church, our beliefs, and our wider community. People are present for each other, especially through Caring Friends. OUUC does amazing service for the community, including through Books, Brownies and Beans, Share the Plate and community volunteer opportunities.

Intellectual Growth: Engaging at OUUC challenges people to think about ideas, concepts and issues that help clarify our values and think about the larger world and our place in it. This happens through Sunday services, adult education classes, community involvement opportunities and social justice initiatives. People appreciate how OUUC helps them grow as individuals.

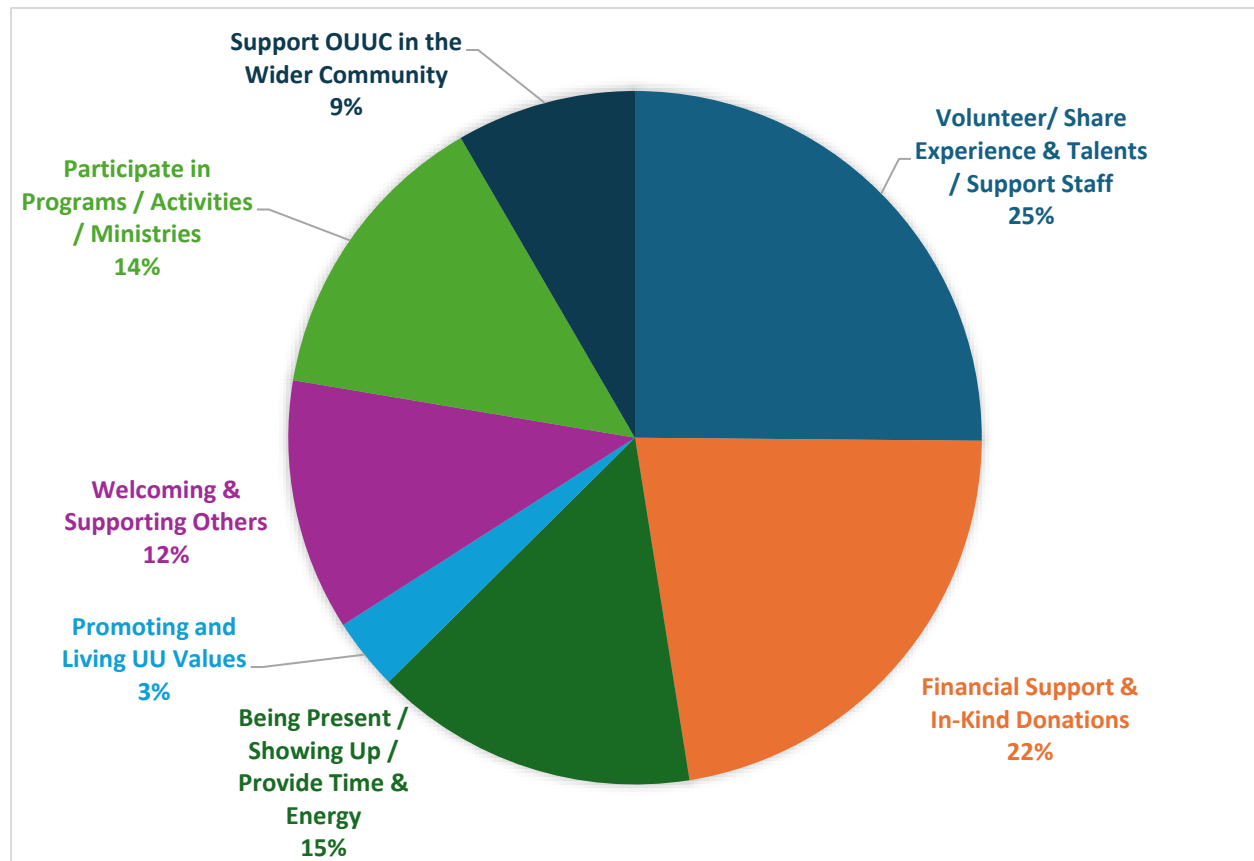
Support in Difficult Times / Hope: Many people noted that attending OUUC centers them and hopeful during a difficult political climate. It provides comfort and safety. Our membership values receiving support when needed and giving support to others during times of need. Being a supportive community provides a sense of connection and help people feel that they are not alone.

Welcoming Congregation: Our congregation welcomes newcomers. It is a place where you can be honest about who you are. There are a lot of 'on-ramps' for participation, through volunteering and service, learning opportunities, and spiritually centering activities.

Minister / Staff: People appreciated our wise and inspiring ministers and staff that provide leadership, organization, inspiration, and help us connect and grow.

HOW I NURTURE OUUC

82 comments were recorded about 'How I Nurture OUUC'. The discussion points fell into seven common categories:



Volunteer/ Share Experience & Talents / Support Staff: 45 people stated that they volunteer in some capacity, sometimes in several different ways, in support of OUUC and our community. There are many opportunities for people to get involved, to share our skills and enthusiasm. Volunteering allows us to engage in our community ministry and deepens our connections to each other and to OUUC.

Financial Support & In-Kind Donations: 40 people mentioned that they financially support OUUC, through pledging, the auction, in-kind donations, capital and other special campaigns, and the Sunday offering. Some people noted they give what they can and wish they could do more. Others were clear about their ability to pledge and provide regular financial support. Our members understand the importance of their commitment to financially supporting OUUC, even though they have different financial resources available and ways to contribute.

Being Present / Showing Up / Provide Time & Energy: Many people mentioned the importance of showing up and being involved in our community, in the myriad different ways that is possible. This makes our community stronger, more diverse, caring and sustainable. It strengthens our community and each participating individual.

Participating in Programs / Activities / Ministries: OUUC is at the center of many people's lives. In addition to Sunday services, many people choose to participate in OUUC programs, activities and ministries and experience value from attending.

Welcoming & Supporting Others: Many people mentioned how welcomed they felt when they started attending OUUC. Others noted that they intentionally welcome people they don't know when they see them at church events and activities. Pastoral Care and Caring Friends helps people in need, and helps people in need feel welcomed and supported in our community. Developing relationships with others in the community is important to many. One person mentioned that they 'pour all the love they have and accept all the love OUUC gives them'.

Support OUUC in the Wider Community: People mentioned the importance of marching with other church members in support of social justice causes in line with our values in the wider community. Others noted that they volunteered for activities and ministries that have an impact outside of OUUC, such as cooking at the Community kitchen, representing OUUC on community activities and providing community outreach.

Promoting and Living UU Values: When we live our values, we change ourselves, our community and our world for the better.

In Summary, OUUC has a very engaged membership who love our community and are committed to its success. As one person said, 'OUUC is more than the sum of its parts'.