

Rabbi Report to UUCGT Board March/April, 2017

Highlights

- Giving up anger for Lent project
- Clergy Connections – local and national
- Preparing for UU Regional Assembly
- We're hosting "Clergy and Pie"

Congregational Care

Deep gratitude to Joanie Jackson and Pat Light who co-chair this vital team. I have a regular number of members and friends whom I call and/or visit each week. I continue to be impressed with the presence of CCT members at Sunday services – making themselves available and being a visible reminder of our principles. I am pleased that my idea of having them wear a stole seems to be working nicely.

Staff and Operations

Operations typically meets weekly to ensure the smooth management of building use, communication between SRC and staff, daily management of the congregation (from mice to computer issues to member and committee needs) and mutual support. Staff evaluations of Sarah and Susan will be completed by May 15.

Sunday Services

Once again, I highlight that it is a delight to work with our Sunday Services team. We continue to carefully review feedback at each meeting; Amanda charts patterns of feedback so we can better incorporate the wants and needs of our members and friends who take the time to share their reflections.

Life Cycle Planning

I delighted that a new program is emerging, led by Heather Schumaker and Marco Cabrera, with Sarah and I in staff support roles, to create a Coming of Age program. This program will be a widely-publicized effort for learners from 7th to 9th grade and will include OWL. I will share details as they emerge; our plan is launch the program this Fall.

Denominational Activity

I am preparing for the Regional Assembly in Oak Brook, IL. Prior to the Assembly I will attend ministry days prior to the Assembly with my UU colleagues.

As you know we are in the midst of a major shakeup at the very top of the UUA. This is causing significant distress and soul searching and will surely be part of the conversation at the regional meeting. How this matters to UUCGT is that we as a denomination are exploring "white supremacy, racism and power," per UU world. We are discussing this at Sunday services, and I have personally enrolled in an online course called "Healing Toxic Whiteness." You can learn about the course here: <http://everydayfeminism.com/programs/ca-online-seminar/curriculum/hfw-session-1/>

Safe Congregation Response Team

Thanks to the SCRT for its work.

Public Witness

On March 8 we hosted a half day program and lunch at UUCGT for #ADayWithoutAWoman. What was most delightful was that most of the 20 or so attendants were non-members, people who were in our building for the first time and has a meaningful experience in discussion, connection and sharing a meal. We also made TV 7&4 news. Since then, some of the women have returned for Sunday services.

As you know I was honored to give the Anne Marie Filkin Memorial Lecture at the American Medical Directors Association annual conference in Phoenix. There were about 1000 in attendance. To my delight there were many UUs in the audience (including the AMDA Executive Director) who introduced themselves. I was pleased that many of them knew about UUCGT because of our “first-ness” in hiring a rabbi. The speech was well received and UUCGT got really good national level PR for this.

The local clergy group I started with some colleagues, called “Clergy and Pie,” for our regular menu, continues to meet and UUCGT will be hosting for the first time on April 19. We gather monthly to offer support, share ideas and create programming. We are deeply grateful to our Dr. Nick Erber who has organized a day long training via “Gospel Against Aids,” a program aimed at helping clergy be better supporters and advocates for people living with AIDS.

Small Group Ministries

InterPlay continues to be a positive experience for participants, thanks to our member Lee Edwards. The Women’s New Moon Group continues to meet, co-lead by me and member Carolyn Kelly. The Little Spiritual Book Group will resume its monthly schedule.

Requested Actions for the Board:

Please stay informed about developments at the national level. An easy way to do this is via <http://www.uuworld.org/>

Please consider how we might be “best practices” role models for communication within the organization. Here’s an article I want to distribute widely from the renowned Alban Institute whose mission is to help “leaders connect and learn from one another by sharing practical wisdom, stories of thriving congregations and transformational models of ministry.” There are many excellent points here <https://alban.org/archive/cleaning-up-bad-communication-habits/>