

Highlights from the Last Month:

- Sunday services have resumed energetically
- Ministers March on Washington
- “Peace in the Midst” gathering at the State Theatre
- Community organizing class at CTU is going to be very helpful to UUCGT

Major Activities/Goals

Congregational Care

It is with sadness that I share the news that Paul Wheaton, father of member Paula Jo Kemler has died. Also Gretchen Bard, mother of our past President Becky Somsel, also died. In the weeks prior I provided pastoral care to both families. The Congregational Care will be holding a day long retreat in September to plan our work for the coming year. Gratitude to Pat Light and Joanie Jackson.

Social Witness

The Ministers March for Justice in Washington DC was a moving, inspiring event. I helped organize the UU ministers and Renewal rabbis to meet up and march intersectionally. It is important that our congregational and leadership and members come to understand intersectionality. The UU Fellowship of Dekalb, IL recently hosted an event and defined intersectionality this way:

If we truly want to understand how oppression works and how to fight it, we must understand how different systems of privilege and oppression – race, gender, class, age, and so on – intersect. In other words, we can't assume that all women have the same experience – we need to pay attention to how each woman's income, class background, race, and religion impact her life. As UUs concerned with social justice, “intersectionality” is not just an academic buzzword. It is a way to engage more fully with social justice and make a positive difference.

Following the march I and others went to the UUA satellite office in Washington DC which is housed at Impact Hub, “the home for Washington's change agents.” Please take a quick look at their site: <https://washington.impacthub.net/> This is related to where we are going as a community.

The “Peace in the Midst” program at the State Theater was well attended and well received. We are now planning follow up action. I have committed to two projects: gathering the readings and bios of the speakers from that evening and putting them together in a booklet, and co-creating with Rev. Phil Garrison and JoAnne Cook from the Grand Traverse Band a one day “peace camp” retreat for grown-ups.

Our UUCGT Social Witness committee is in the process of re-forming. I will have more to report on that next month. ***Think intersectionality.***

Denominational Affairs

We have had one special collection and will have another on September 24 for Hurricane Relief. We are working with the UUA and the UU Service Committee (UUSC) for direct funds.

Information on where we are sharing our funds can be found here: <http://bit.ly/2xAHmYH>

I am looking forward to attending the UUMA's Excellence in Ministry program in January. I felt this was a better use of professional development resources than this year's regional retreat. (I will do the regional retreat next year.) I will be taking a course on prophetic leadership in the digital age.

The Institute is described this way:

At the Institute, away from the demands of our ministries, we create a new space for one another, for study, and for new connections, and yes - one more place to feel the power of the spirit - to worship. Here is a place to share one on one, to dream alongside others, or to simply walk alone along the beach. Time to think and follow your thoughts to a decision. Time to let your thoughts go and be.

This is a time for grounding in purpose; a chance for clergy to come together to learn how to better build multi-cultural beloved communities, faithfully address the broken places in our world, preach at the next level, lead religious institutions, create sacred spaces, and sustain our selves in our ministry. <http://www.uuma.org/event/institute>

Leadership Skill Building

As I mentioned at the study session I am taking an online course through the UU Institute on Healthy Leadership 101, an introduction to systems thinking. While much of the material is familiar to me, I want to demonstrate to the congregation that I am committed to growing as a leader, investing time to be the best spiritual leader I can be.

This semester at CTU has also begun. I am taking two courses: Community Organizing: An Interfaith Approach and an Independent Study called Trusting *Ruach HaKodesh*: Critical Assessment of Deep Ecumenism and Comparative Theology with a Focus on Interreligious Dialogue in the Abrahamic Faiths.

Sunday Services

Sunday services resumed with a bang on September 10. Sunday services is holding a day long retreat September 23 to lay out our year, do some shared learning and have some fun together.

Operations Team

The operations team has moved its meeting to Mondays. We continue to be the first point of contact for several areas. The morale of the staff seems good to me.

Requests for Board Action

Please take a quick look at Impact Hub DC's site: Please take a quick look at their site: <https://washington.impacthub.net/>

Please consider signing up for an online leadership class through the UUA. There is a course in Healthy Leadership 101 (the one I am taking) and there is also a course in Compassionate Communication that might be a good starting point for the community to do some shared learning <http://www.uuinstitute.org/courses/compcommunication-105-f17/>

Please save the date, **Saturday evening, December 2** for my installation.