

Highlights from the Last Month:

- Hosted interfaith vigil for justice
- Celebrated Jewish High Holidays
- Christmas Eve planning has begun

Major Considerations/Activities/Goals

Integrating Function of Our Many Committees

Friends, I have learned something from Rev. Tandy Scheffler of Oak Ridge UU Church. We have members whose primary locus with UUCGT is their work on committees. That is, worship is not their primary access. This is just fine! I want to request that we consider, through the Program Council (when we are finished planning Thanksgiving Feast) and the LDC, looking at how every committee can do its work AND ensure that every committee is a place of LEARNING, SERVICE and CARING. What does this mean? As part of regular committee meetings, including

- 1) learning (i.e., see below that Sunday Services will be reading *Worship That Works*, a book on UU worship),
- 2) a check in and some social time away from the meeting (caring for each other), and
- 3) serving (by doing the work of the committee)

In other words, in whatever way people choose to “plug in” to participating in UUCGT, let’s work to ensure that we are supporting each of these dimensions. I would strongly encourage every committee once in a while just go out for fun.

Congregational Care

I have provided pastoral care for a number of members this month, supporting people in person and by phone. The Congregational Care retreat was postponed due to my fall and will be held October 20. One thing we are wrestling with is the scope of our role. Gratitude to Pat Light and Joanie Jackson.

Sunday Services

SSC held a day-long retreat at the home of Donna Stein-Harris. This was a wonderful opportunity to step back from the pace of planning and reflect on worship as a whole, to consider the bigger picture and talk through changes we want to make based on the feedback we receive. We will be adding a short study session to each meeting, using the book *Worship That Works: Theory and Practice for Unitarian Universalists*.

Social Witness Intersectionality

With deepest gratitude to Paula Jo Kemler and the ongoing commitment of Lynnette Rhodes, I joyfully request that Board support Kim Sibilsy and Barb Conley as co-leads of our emerging Social Witness program. It is our hope that Emmy Lou Cholack will continue her work in Social Justice Action. Social Witness, we believe, will have a different focus.

We have many members already active in a number of social justice activities: Indivisible, Safe Harbor, Fr. Fred, etc. The question we want to take in social witness is how can UUCGT nurture, support and lift up these leaders in what they are (already) doing?

This work will likely include:

- 1) Helping with education around major issues
- 2) Nurturing our members through UUCGT programs that help them develop their own habits and beliefs
- 3) Planning action (in partnership with Emmy Lou)
- 4) Learning how to use social media
- 5) Planning and providing retreats for leaders to recharge and reflect

Denominational Affairs

As I said last month I am very much looking forward to attending the UUMA's Excellence in Ministry program in January.

I am planning to propose a program for next year's GA, which takes place June 20-24, in lovely Kansas City, MO. The theme "We are Called" offers a wonderful opportunity for us to reflect on personal and organizational mission.

Please note that beginning in November, there is a monthly Michigan cluster meeting for clergy of UU. I am working to see if I can include this important networking and peer support time into my schedule. (It will involve an overnight because the meeting starts at 9 AM in a rotating location downstate.)

Leadership Skill Building

Again, 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.

I'm behind in my UU Institute on Healthy Leadership 101, an introduction to systems thinking. The Community Organizing: An Interfaith Approach course is amazing. I am more and more integrating the learning into my preaching and community action.

Requests for Board Action

- 1) Is there a book on leadership that we can work into our monthly agenda that can enhance our leadership skills, deepen our reflection and give us a chance to experience each other as fellow learners? What do you think of the UU book *Serving with Grace: Lay Leadership as a Spiritual Practice* as a possibility? The book is short, easy reading. Contents are:

- The Spirituality of Service
- Self-Discovery
- No Is as Sacred as Yes
- Mindful Meetings
- Mission and Community
- I Put My Hand in Yours
- Bringing It All Together

- 2) Please affirm Lynnette Rhodes, Kim Sibilsky and Barb Conley as co-leads of our emerging Social Witness program.
- 3) Please save the date, **Saturday evening, December 2** for my installation.