

Rabbi Report to Board, February 2018

Highlights from the Last Month:

- Ministry Excellence program – all about designing worship!
- Congregational Care – heartfelt work
- Sunday services are feeling robust!
- Getting my health back

Major Considerations/Activities/Goals

My Focus for 2018: Building Small Group Ministry

Friends as you know my focus this year is on building small group ministries. Starting this month we will resume our 9 AM programming, with a dialogue around Karen Armstrong's *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life*. I am hoping we can spark several small group ministries – they need not all last longer than a few months at a time (like reading a book together), but each time we create closer involvement with one another and build relationships we strengthen the community.

Sunday Services

Using the book *Worship That Works: Theory and Practice for Unitarian Universalists* we are exploring “best practices,” particularly around feedback we have received from attendants at services. I am not asking our various groups to read things only so we gain the information – INTERACTING through shared learning is an important part of deepening congregational relationships.

Social Witness Intersectionality

Kim Sibilsky, Lynnette Rhodes, Linda Fletcher, Barb Connolly and I met to talk further about the vision for our Social Witness work. I am truly excited about the level of visioning this amazing group has. We are eager to get things off the ground.

Denominational Affairs

I continue to be pleased that we are creating intersection ways to explore and lift up UU heritage and ideals through programming. We are finding increasingly engaging ways to do this – like the new 9 AM program that is a powerful expression of our seven principles.

I plan to attend ministry days prior to the General Assembly in June. I had a wonderful experience in the Excellence in Ministry conference which I was able to attend via live streaming. Once I have had a chance to meet with Sunday services and talk about how we will plan for implementing some of these ideas – you will see it on Sundays!

I have been unable to attend the western Michigan UUMA cluster meetings so far. They are far, it is snowy and they are only about 2 hours long. I have them on my calendar as we move toward spring.

I will be attending the Spring UUMA Midwest Chapter retreat April 14 – 18. It is somewhere in Indiana.

Vocal Ensemble

I wish to mention and appreciate the increased participation of the Vocal Ensemble in Sunday Services twice a month. It has been such a welcoming and wonderful expansion.

Congregational Care

We have had a tremendous amount of need for congregational care in the last month. With winter, an aging population and tough cold and flu season it has been very busy. In the last month I have had over 30 pastoral care calls and visits.

Membership

I am looking forward to meeting with the membership team this month. In the mean time I have photocopied the names and contact information from all our members who have joined in the last year and will be personally phoning to say thank you, check in and explore places where they might connect with UUCGT more.

Doctor of Ministry Work

Friends I am in the home stretch! By the time of our meeting I will have just seven more physical classes to attend and then I will begin working on my thesis-project, which addresses the theology of hospitality in an interfaith context. SUPER exciting. Thank you for your support in this process.

Request for Board Action

Kim Cameron, author of *Positive Leadership: Strategies for Extraordinary Performance*, writes, "The four positive leadership strategies include cultivating positive climate, positive relationships, positive communication, and positive meaning...Positive leaders are unusual in that they choose to emphasize the uplifting and flourishing side of organizational life, even in the face of difficulty. It is not that they ignore the negative or adopt a Pollyannaish perspective, but they counter the tendency toward negativity with an abundance of positivity. In the absence of such an emphasis, negative inclinations overwhelm the positive, and a negative climate is the default option. This implies that leaders need intentional strategies to enable a positive climate in their organizations."

I would like to board to consider ways we can help foster an increasingly, intentionally positive climate in our interactions with each other, with staff and with our members. One way we can start: please drop one of our staff members, Sunday service coordinators, facilities, LE volunteers, etc. an email, note or a phone call (or stop in) to say "Good job on ..."
If we each did this once a month, we would be off to a powerful start.

Let's work to make the positive more visible. Find just one thing each month that is working or that you appreciate and make it visible to the volunteers or staff who made it happen.