

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Grand Traverse

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Rabbi Chava Bahle



May 23, 2018

Greetings to all my fellow Congregants,

Our Annual Meeting is once again before us. This year our community has significant decisions to consider.

We have eight elected leadership positions to fill. These leaders will refine our mission and evaluate our ability to fulfill our aspirations and common purpose as we move into the future.

We have an Endowment Committee Bylaw proposal to consider. Currently, over one-half of the UUCGT Bylaws refer to the Endowment Committee. This year, the Policy Committee has supported the Endowment Committee in an effort to create a more flexible structure while maintaining the integrity and safety of the Endowment Fund. The Congregation will be asked to revise the overall Bylaw structure, some of which will be replaced by Policy.

During our Pledge Drive this year, our community was asked to consider increasing their pledges and over 40% were able to make increased contributions for the year ahead. Unfortunately, that gain was mitigated by the reduction or loss of other pledges. The loss in some pledge income seems to reflect unavoidable life changes (for example, death of a congregant or spouse, moving, circumstantial economic change). For several years we have enjoyed carrying a surplus into the New Year, but that has evaporated this fiscal year. Finally, the rate of new membership and accompanying contributions has declined as well.

Before us lies the implementation of a significantly smaller budget. Our staff represents approximately 80% of our budget. We are redefining our Lifespan Experience Director's role and making a reduction in our Music Director's hours as well. This is a reconciliation of our hopes and dreams with our financial resources. It is a time to reexamine our financial dependence on the pledge system. Many churches have moved away from this model. Our new Board will seek alternative models as well as fund raisers in the months ahead. We can and will get through this transition. We have a group of candidates for our next Board that are willing and well capable to carry on this work.

Please consider attending the Annual Meeting on Sunday, June 3. With so much at stake, your involvement is critical. If it is impossible to attend, please inform yourself on the issues and vote absentee. Details are available through the office. I hope to see you on June 3rd.

Respectfully submitted,

Karl D. Love

OUR VISION

*We are a Congregation creating a better world by nurturing the heart & expanding the mind.
We provide a safe, caring community where all can freely explore diverse religious thought.*