

Rabbi Chava Report to UUCGT Board of Trustees August, 2017

Highlights

- Return from contractual study time
- Life cycles of Mercedes Kimling and John Ort
- Increased attendance at August 6 service
- Building communication between staff and Staff Resources

Gleanings from Study Time

Dr. Martin Shaw writes, “We lose touch with our wingspan when we hunch.” My study time gave me blessed opportunity to remember **my** wingspan. Of particular use was a book I was gifted, *The Art of Pastoring: Contemplative Reflections* by William C. Martin. With rest, study, lengthy solitude in nature, ample reading, being with the monks of Gethsemani, work with a UU counselor and unhurried time with family, I was able to un-hunch from the stresses of work, school (totally aced last semester by the way), and 10 months of ill health.

What I discovered is that carrying too much busyness and grief about UUCGT creates hunching that guards my true heart.

I return with an open heart, a deep well of patience and a return to the joy and good humor I hope marks my real personality. I am ready to put the difficulties and profound hurts and sorrows of the last two years behind me, gleaning some wisdom, finding forgiveness and renewing my trust and appreciation for UUCGT.

I also realized I cannot go more than a few months without going to the monastery. It will keep me balanced and unhunched.

Update on Major Activities/Goals

Congregational Care – Since my return I have placed greater emphasis on outreach and in person visits to members and their families who are celebrating joys or having concerns. While away I read a very helpful book by Joyce Rupp, *Your Sorrow Is My Sorrow: Hope and Strength in Times of Suffering*, on the idea that pastoral care is largely about the act of accompaniment, not fixing or overtending. For example, she writes (adapted for UU): “*There are many people in my world today who are hearing difficult news. They will need an anchor of strength to keep them from being swept away in their waves of worry and fear. In particular, I think of _____ . There is no easy way through this time of turmoil. May _____ remain open and confident of life’s guidance. Help me to be a source of compassion and hope for her (him).*”

Staff/Staff Resources – A major step forward in bringing renewed energy and alignment between the staff and staff resources will be a conversation (or more than one) we are hoping to schedule in September, with all staff and the full SRC. Beginning with honest, dialogue will help align our hearts. Above all what came to me when I was away was “Lead always and only from Love.”

Sunday Services – I was delighted to return to a robust and joyous crowd on August 6. The sanctuary was nearly full and was clearly full joy. It is a pleasure to work with John, who is flexible and good humored about rolling with all-surprising unfolding of crafting an experience for others.

Committee on Ministry - The Committee on Ministry and I have decided to change the date of the celebration of ministry because several key folks are not able to be with us on that date. Please note that I would like to request that we have the formal board installation on that date Sunday, September 17). The theme of the service how we build our congregation into a house of our dreams. I'll be sharing some of my 10 year vision and ask the board to think about how you want "be installed."

Social Witness – As you may know my study time included a major presentation for the School Sisters of St. Francis in Milwaukee. The theme was Jewish-Catholic-Muslim dialogue. The UUA's commitment to interfaith dialogue was well represented. I will share feedback as soon as I get the forms in the mail.

Per policy, I approved a request from Mike McDonald to put up a table for two Sundays with information on Safe Harbor, of which we are a partner congregation. Please save the dates for our time to assist at the new building December 9 – 16. Mike is arranging for us to partner with other groups. It would be great if the board could choose an evening to serve dinner together.

Please recall Emmy Lou Cholak's invitation: The Michigan UU Social Justice Network is having its annual retreat at UUCGT on Saturday, August 26 in the classroom, beginning about 9 and ending around 2. Lunch is included. Please RSVP to Emmy Lou so she can order lunch.

Denominational Activity – I am asking the board to consider whether we want to apply to be a UUA Breakthrough Congregation. Please see the two page application attached and read more here: <http://www.uua.org/growth/breakthrough> Since the application is due September 1, we might want to look at next year, but let's be visionary!

Questions and Requested Actions for the Trustees

I request that we have the board installation on Sunday, September 17. The theme of the service how we build our congregation into a house of our dreams. I'll be sharing some of my 10 year vision and ask the board to think about how you want "be installed." You might take a look at the UUA's offerings here: <http://bit.ly/2wAeQTn>

Please save the dates for our time to assist at Safe Harbor December 9 – 16. It would be great if the trustees could choose an evening to serve dinner together.



Congregation/Organization Name

Address

Website

Social Media

Year Established _____ Number of Members _____

Sunday Attendance: Adult _____ Children/Youth _____

Annual Operating Expenses _____

Fair Share/Honor: UUA Region N/A

Covenanted Community?

Setting: Urban Suburban Rural

Other Explanation if "Other" _____

In this application, we are looking for congregations that have demonstrated an innovation or adaptation that is entirely new to the congregation and could be useful to other congregations. Innovations may be either sustainable or bold one-time changes of great impact and meaning. This isn't about numerical growth, congregational size or even whole-congregation programming. We want to celebrate innovative ways congregations are adapting to the challenges that they face in this changing religious landscape.

Contact Information (name and email)

Board President Name _____ Email _____

Parish Minister Name _____ Email _____

RE Professional Name _____ Email _____

Other Staff Connected to Your Innovation _____

Recommendations: When you email this form, please also attach two written recommendations: one from someone directly impacted by the innovation and another from someone outside the congregation (ie, UUA staff or community member) who is familiar with the innovation.

- I understand that UUA and Regional Staff will be contacted to verify this application.
- If applicable, the parish minister and religious education (RE) professional have been made aware of this application.
- This application comes from the Board or a Board delegate, and has been approved by the Board.

Applicant Name _____ Email _____

Applications should be sent to breakthrough@uua.org by September 1, 2017.



Sharing Your Story

Instructions: Please use as much space as you need to answer these questions. The gray boxes will expand to accommodate your answers.

- 1. DESCRIPTION:** Describe your innovative congregational adaptation? What ministry of the church is it a part of? What population or process does it serve? How long has this innovation been in existence?
- 2. IMPACT:** What impact has it had? What challenge or need was it trying to address? What were you trying to achieve? How has this innovation prepared you for new challenges your congregation is facing? How has this innovation helped you advance or expand fulfilled your mission?
- 3. PROCESS & SYSTEMS WORK:** Tell us about the process you used to create/implement/evaluate this innovation. What hurdles did you face/overcome while implementing this innovation? i.e. How did you achieve buy in from members? What kind of systems and church culture work was involved?
ex: What stakeholders were consulted, did the congregation vote, did you have to “market” this innovation to the congregation? What groups (committees, staff, clergy, organizations inside or outside the congregation) partnered together to make this work?
- 4. LEARNING:** What have you learned from your innovation? What factors contributed to your success? What would you have done differently? What did it teach you about leadership? How did it shift your understanding of the challenges of the 21st century?
- 5. SHARING:** What do you think your innovation has to teach other congregations about adapting to the challenges facing Unitarian Universalist congregations today?