

DRE September 2018 Board Report

This month, my report looks much different than my regular reports since a) it is my last and b) these are the things I think need to be passed on. I gave a first draft of this to Linda Fletcher and Donna Stein Harris when we met on 9/7/18, but I have since updated it, and modified a couple of areas. I hope that this is beneficial to you as you consider the future of Religious education and Family Ministry in this congregation.

Sarah's Brain Dump

This is done in order of priority – or at least things that I would consider to be a priority:

1. Find teachers/volunteers for Sunday Mornings. I have attached a calendar (*gave this to Donna and Linda*). While I have been trying for several weeks to get this filled, this continues to be a huge volunteer gap for the congregation. You need **TWO** volunteers for the classroom on Sundays per Safe Congregation Policy. The 1st and 3rd Sundays (and 5th if there is one) will be Religious Education Sundays. (We will not start the curriculum until AFTER Labor Day. Our first Religious Education Sunday will be 9/16.) On these Sundays there will be curriculum based classes for children preschool-5th grade during the service (following the Story Wisdom). The curriculum we are using this year is Katie Covey's "Picture Book UU". The 2nd and 4th Sundays will be All Congregation Sundays when all ages are invited to remain in the sanctuary for the duration of the service. Childcare will be available on these Sundays for those children preschool-5th grade who need it (please note – this will be *childcare NOT Religious Education*). At this time, given the number of middle school- high school youth, we will have the youth remain in the service every Sunday. We can reevaluate this based on the registration forms we receive this fall.
 - a. The curriculum for the year is Katie Covey's "Picture Book UU" curriculum. I have purchased all the books necessary, and have ordered three full copies of the curriculum to be printed. These copies will be in binders on the top shelf of my cubby, along with the picture books required. I have put the books in order according to the lessons from left to right on shelf. Teachers will need to arrange to retrieve their lessons from the office in advance of the Sunday they are volunteering – I have sent these electronically in the past, but they will need to do this for themselves until something else is arranged.

- b. Teachers will need to review their lessons in advance and arrange for whatever supplies they need each week. There are lots of materials in the RE storage closet in the small classroom, as well as in the organizers in the classrooms themselves (we'll get to the storage closet later).
 - c. On the All Congregation (non-curriculum) Sundays when the children are invited to remain in the service, we have still said that we would provide childcare. This is just straight-up childcare. Playing games with the kids, blocks, coloring, whatever. It could be that you could combine the nursery and the prek-5th grade childcare – then you could have the two nursery staff members help cover the adult volunteer spots. I'd still try to get at least one volunteer for these Sundays though in case one of the nursery staff need to care for an infant. Frankly, it's going to be helpful to you that you really only have to cover twice per month with a full complement of teachers – you may decide that until there are more people volunteering that the congregation cannot sustain offering childcare during the All Congregation services (non-curriculum Sundays). If it means something to the parents, they may have to just step up.
 - d. Also – on non-curriculum Sundays I would suggest having some “busy bags” or coloring sheets and crayons available for children who remain in the service. You can have these at either door with the greeters. This will help keep smaller children engaged in something. You can find lots of UU related clip-art online (try Alice the Chalice for instance).
 - e. I am working with Sunday Services at finding ways to involve the children more in the services as well, which should keep them more interested.
2. Friday Night Out
- a. This NEEDS to be a priority. It's the longest currently running family ministry that this congregation has. Amanda Sparks is in a good position to manage this, as she is part of the Facebook group that I created for it. Jessica Shaw and Ariel Love staff it every month, and the programmatic costs are built into the budget. It is easy – sign up families in advance (no more than 12 kids for our two childcare providers), order the pizza (I use Dominos because they give us a discount – you have to remind them though – we get a \$7 one topping and no tax). We only ever order chees or chees and peperoni – and most children seem to prefer cheese. You'll need to use your judgement on how many to order based on the ages and appetites of the children signed up – that's why this would

be best carried on by Amanda, Jessica, or Ariel (as I said though, Amanda has access to the Facebook group). FNO is 5:30-9pm on the second Friday of every month. Pizza is delivered at 6pm. I Believe Donna and Linda have actually already set up how this will operate going forward with the nursery staff.

3. Registration forms for 2018-2019

- a. Families are required to re-register their children/youth annually. New forms for this year have been placed on the Welcome Table, and a link has been placed in the Flash. Susan also has an electronic file of them. These will need to be submitted to somewhere – maybe just to my old mailbox in the office for the time being. These should be kept with the attendance records (black folder, 4th shelf, cubby). Old registration and attendance is in the bottom right file drawer of the desk. A year of attendance/registration is Sept of current year through August of the coming year. Copies of the forms should go into the Sunday Morning Programming Binder (next to the registration/attendance binder) – teachers need these on hand to be aware of any allergies. The fact that people need to re-register should be announced from the pulpit and be in the Flash at least through the beginning of October. Blank forms should be in the Sunday Morning Programming Binder as well so teachers can give them to parents as needed to fill out.

4. Teachers

- a. Good Luck... ok, I'll be serious. Folks who have helped or have expressed interest in the past include: Bob Fitch, Ken Sands, Barb Termaat, Laura Matchett, Kat Norman and Keith Anderson, Dianna Briggs. This would be a place to start. New teachers need to complete a DHS background check (that Sheri used to run), as well as fill out a teacher packet (I've given a sample of this packet to Donna and Linda). We very unfortunately lost a great many volunteers for our program, including committee members over the congregational unrest of a couple of years ago.
- b. Teachers need to be reminded to take attendance each week, and that children can't leave the classroom until someone signs them out.

5. Family Ministry bi-weekly email blast. This is an important new ministry that participants have enjoyed. I have been using the following site to create it:

<https://www.lucidpress.com/users/login#>

- a. Login email is: dle@uucgt.org

- b. Password is 6726center
 - c. We have a membership for the coming year to gain access to this tool. Here are a list of recipients and a sample email: 'jmsgranny@gmail.com'; 'cainnes409@gmail.com'; 'Sarah Melius' <meliussa@icloud.com>; 'andymelius07@yahoo.com'; 'Robert Fitch' <bfitch47@yahoo.com>; Kat Norman (Anderson) <kakn922@gmail.com>; Maja Bombaugh-Laforest (majalaforest@gmail.com); 'susanah@umich.edu'
6. Good Afternoon Friends!

Please click on the link below to access our bi-monthly Family Ministry e-blast.

If this email has reached you in error, or if you no longer wish to receive future issues, please let me know.

The password to access this issue is: **August2!**

<https://pubsecure.lucidpress.com/f241fa3f-1f5a-4360-af8b-f4ee5c6c2900/>

7. We have a year membership to “Faith Rocket” which is through the church of the Larger Fellowship. Once a month they send an email with a password/code for access to the materials for the month. This is an excellent resource for material for the Family Ministry e-blast, material for Sunday Services, parent/family content for the Flash, etc. I would suggest that this be forwarded to whoever will be taking on these things. The contact for Faith Rocket is: launchpad@launchpad.faith I’d encourage you to continue to subscribe to this annually – I’ve been using Church of the Larger Fellowship resources for years, and I find them more accessible than the UUA Tapestry of Faith
8. Interfaith Events
- a. So we’ve done things over the years in which we have been in a position to bring people throughout our community together for whatever – Transgender Day of Remembrance, Christmas Eve at the State Theater, etc. It would be a real shame not to pass these on to groups that are equipped to handle them if we cannot. Especially Christmas at the State – **I would hate to see a group take over this spot that is not inclusively-minded.** I highly recommend that you reach out to Harry Dorman, the leader of ACORD – Area Council on Religious Diversity (our local Interfaith Council) to see if they would take over these events if we cannot. Harry’s email address is: hdorman4270@gmail.com.

9. Stuff:

- a. Susan and I will set an out of office reply set to say something about me no longer being in the position and for immediate assistance please contact the office, per my conversation with Linda Fletcher and Donna Stein Harris. People who really need something could then reach out to her.
- b. The closet... it's a pit. It was a pit when I inherited it, and no one has ever been willing to help me tear everything out and rearrange it (which is exactly what I would recommend doing). 7 program years of kids and teachers riffling through it has taken an even greater toll on a mess.
- c. The basement... there are years' worth of costumes, supplies, old curriculum, etc. in the basement. As well as props from plays, wrapping paper, etc. – it's all on the shelves.
- d. The desk and cubby... I will be clearing out my personal items and leaving what belongs to the church, as well as what I inherited in the drawers. The drawers have things like notepads, postcards/greeting cards, markers/crayons, and other office supplies/materials. I will likewise throw away anything that's just junk
- e. There is a box on the shelf in the cubby labeled "Heifer" – these are the paper animals for the Heifer Tree we do each December. There is also a box of costume pieces that Sunday Services may find helpful.
- f. There is a sound bar in the cubby that could potentially be hooked up to one of the TVs – it was donated.
- g. You're going to want to be mindful of books disappearing from the cubby shelves – **it happens. Be especially mindful of the top shelf books that are for the curriculum.**
- h. Someone will need to figure out if the congregation is doing the Crop Walk this year – John Hoffmann has lead that effort the past couple of years on behalf of Lifespan Experience
- i. The chalkboard wall will need to have a new steward.
- j. Someone will need to make sure that for upcoming congregational meetings (especially the event in October) that there is childcare arranged, and that the children are fed. I would suggest putting out a sign up that includes "*do you need childcare? How many children? Ages of children?*" and advertise this. The cut off should be a week before the event to give the childcare folks you have lined up enough time to plan on whether or not they for sure are needed. I know there is going to be a presentation after the service

on 10/21 as part of the potluck – children are probably not going to want to sit through this either, so I'd recommend asking the nursery staff to stay over.

- k. I will move the electronic files that you might need to be most readily accessible to the desktop of the DRE computer so you don't have to go hunting to figure out where they are or what they are called. These will contain the things you might need to have at your fingertips like attendance forms, volunteer teacher info, and the curriculum for the year, registration forms for children, etc.
- l. Barb Termaat and Laura Matchett and I have already met to discuss the work of the Safe Congregation Team. They have not, however, had to work through an actual "issue" yet (thank goodness). Should a Safe Congregation issue arise before Chava comes back, I would advise that you reach out to Joe Cook as a former member of that team. He helped work through several "issues" and deliberations, and I think his wisdom and experience with the policy would be helpful to Barb and Laura. I am also willing to remain on this team as a lay person for institutional memory purposes if the Board would like me to do so.
- m. I gave Donna and Linda my only copy of a report from, and notes on a congregation who has already spent a few years working on a family ministry model – it might be helpful for your consideration of what to do in the future.
- n. If there is interest in OWL (Our Whole Lives Sexual Education) for middle school/high school going forward, Keith Anderson and Kat Norman have experience with the curriculum – those books are on the shelf in the cubby.
- o. After a little break, I will continue to volunteer for the congregation on the Sunday Services Committee and with CUUPS. I have already discussed this with the chairs of those committees.