

Notes from Offsite

From Susan Lio:

I would like to emphasize as a newcomer what absolutely amazing work has been accomplished by the board and committees over the less than a year I have been a member. As an outsider, the congregation did not show signs of distress. Given all that was happening and had happened, board and worship and finance did an absolutely amazing job. And it should be expected that there be stress and some form of PTSD by those who have held it together. We need to be learning to share our fears with each other, highlighting successes, and learning to ask for help as we share our concerns. Those in authority can ask for help and this is how we will not burn out. This is a system way down the path of recovery and we can focus on what is working while still moving forward. Positive inquiry needs to accompany changes needed.

History

Founder (Mary Ann Force) - created place for young families and liberal religion

- Can it be reignited

Hiring of first minister - inspired to start attending church. Able to raise \$ to build church

Met at Ladies Literary Club -> moved to Quaker church - lay led

- Started to feel like church. Minister deeply engaged.

Has been up and down since Emmie Lou

- Attract someone like her again?

Most settled ministers were new graduates

In past had commitment to music and programming. Review potential?

Iceberg - Church was full 2014? But it conflict. Discussed in people's living room, small groups. Not all included. Has congregation leaned how to do this better?

- No children in RE program--how to rebuild?

Program Council - No mention in any policies set up by Rabbi. Use as braintrust.

Who should lead? Support leadership development? Better meeting time?

Membership far flung - impacts meetings/schedules. New opportunities to connect?

New Minister landmines:

- Don't fire the choir director
- Misconduct
- Engage everyone in conversation not behind closed doors, move past just meeting (best practice in deciding to seek new minister)

Vicious email from choir participants?

- How to create healthy boundaries? tension how to hold people safely
- Do you have conflict engagement policy? Who's on team?
- Healthy congregation?

Responsibilities and Entity Accountable

Minister

- Preaching / Worship / Music
- Hire / evaluate / fire Staff
 - (consult with board)
- RE / Lifespan / small groups
- Denomination connections
- Pastoral care (Healthy congregations)
- Personal growth (Rites of passage)
- Theological development
- Newsletter / e-news - review meets mission
- Community outreach
- Pathways to membership
- Relationship building
- Committee on Ministry

Board

- Functioning committees (RE, social justice, ...)
- Long-term visioning / planning
- Finance (steward, endowment, fundraising)
- Legal authority
- Facilities
- Policy
- Leadership Development Community
- Safe Congregation Team

Shared / Other

- Communicating shared mission
 - Board makes sure it remains on the table
- Right Relations

Next Steps

Things we've identified thus far that we need to make progress on in preparation for new settled minister:

1. Develop a living Congregational covenant
 - Action: Cathy discuss one element of Congregational covenant every Sunday
2. Develop a Behavior covenant
 - Action: Healthy Congregation team help congregation develop behavior covenant, along with ways the covenant becomes part of our living spiritual practice and how we return to covenant when it is broken
3. Ensure we have the appropriate Governance model for our size congregation
 - Action: Board relook if Policy governance is best fit for UUCGT and adjust as needed
4. Provide sufficient financial resources needed to close important gaps in programming and services such as Lifespan RE, Marketing & Communications (ex. website, signage), and leadership development
 - Action: Cathy is mentoring the Stewardship Committee
5. Evolve Social Justice strategy to excite & easily engage existing and potential members
 - Action: Board develops strategic direction and team structure, then forms team that will create the plan and put it into practice
6. Shift the congregational ecosystem to a new narrative for the future
 - Action: Transition Team work closely with minister to identify barriers to success and how to address them
 - Action: Transition Team and Board have regular ways for our community to respectfully share what's in their heart and mind during this transition for consideration in transition plans
 - Action: Transition Team and Board give regular updates to the congregation on progress with Q&A after Sunday Service, newsletters, Flash, walls, etc.
7. Ensure Policy Manual is aligned and supportive of our future vision
 - Action: Transition Team review current policy manual and discuss desired changes with the Board (including mission statements for each committee)
8. Use Healthy Congregation Tools to heal and nurture right relations in our congregation
 - Action: Leaders (board, TT, HC) practice right relations techniques and model in their behaviors
 - Action: Healthy Congregation team will
 - i. develop and share toolkit of resources
 - ii. Set up opportunities to practice at church

Narrative

- Music is central
- Space is safe / accepting to bring whole self
- Wounded congregation
- If make a mistake, may get clobbered
 - Enable bad behavior-- speak up!!
- Ability to talk about how you feel