

## Rabbi Report to Board, July 2016

### Some Highlights from the Last Month:

- Blessing of the Blossoms (Cherry Festival welcome)
- Vigil at Government Center
- Sunday Services charter for September, 2016 through June, 2017
- Attending General Assembly
- Board Retreat at Kay Sturgeon's home
- Great energy of Sunday services

### How has my view of the future changed?

I feel great enthusiasm and true excitement about the direction of the congregation for the next year. Major thanks are due to Sarah Montgomery-Richards for co-creating a template for our Sunday services for the next year. The template was designed with goal of community engagement and deepening our connection to the six UU sources. A basic philosophy is stated by UU minister Rev. Kathleen Rolenz: "Throughout history, we have moved to the rhythms of mystery and wonder, prophecy, wisdom, teachings from ancient and modern sources, and nature herself." (From <http://www.uua.org/beliefs/what-we-believe/sources>)

I believe John Bailey's expertise and enthusiasm will bring fresh ideas to a robust worship year.

I would STRONGLY encourage the congregation to send a cadre of delegates to the General Assembly in New Orleans next June.

### Update on Major Activities/Goals

Sunday Services – As mentioned above, I am delighted with the template we have created for the year ahead. It honors the best of our sources and will be a highly effective way to meet the worship needs of our members as well as attracting a larger community.

Congregational Care – I continue to provide care to individuals who are ill, hospitalized or otherwise in need.

Staff/Staff Resources – Working with our staff continues to be a joy and we are delighted to welcome John. The pace of movement in the office has picked up and I believe this is a reflection of a congregation that is healing and feeling more positive.

Program Council – I am delighted to have started the program council and delighted that Rick Walter has agreed to be its convener going forward . The PC will meet monthly before service; we will coordinate a calendar with the 9 AM teaching slot so our committee chairs can also participate in education opportunities.

Denominational Affairs – As you know the UUMA has officially voted to change the language of its bylaws because of my application – what an honor! I look forward to our regional assembly in April and am considering attending the Institute for Ministerial Excellence in January.

Social Witness – I was delighted at the community's response to our quickly organized vigil for the victims in Orlando and for the police who were killed in Dallas. We received a lot of good feedback and has interaction with members of the community who had never heard of UUCGT before.

**A Congregation of Learners**: This is a new launch in conjunction with my doctoral studies. Our monthly spiritual book group, 9 AMs (beginning in the Fall), and certain key committees will be asked to jointly read bite-sized sections of books that build upon the healthy congregation/right relations and community outreach model we have already begun.

For example, please see <https://www.facebook.com/events/1771319306416785/> - we are leveraging activities we are already doing as a way to reach more deeply into the community. Here's the text: "Is it possible in this climate for a small group of citizens to make a difference in our social lovingkindness quotient? Brown bag a peaceful lunch, read the book *The Sacred Art of Loving Kindness: Preparing to Practice* by Rami Shapiro and come to listen, share and discuss how we can make our families, community and the world more kind!"

This event is part of the Unitarian Universalist public monthly Little Spiritual Book Series. Next month: Tuesday, August 23, 12 to 1 PM: Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life - Life-Changing Tools for Healthy Relationships, by Marshall Rosenberg will be our topic!

Also please take note if this event on August 5: Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Grand Traverse The Rise of the "Nones" - GenX Millennials - A Conversation About Meaning and Whether Congregational Life Can Add Anything to Yours  
<https://www.facebook.com/events/263653150656951/>

### **Questions/Action Requests for the Board**

- 1) I request that the board approve Chris Innes to the Committee on Ministry.
- 2) I request that the board devote no more than 7 minutes at the beginning of each meeting to share BRIEF gems of insight from a chapter per month of Peter Steinke's Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times. So we would read just one chapter a month and ask each board member to share a "gem" and a one sentence reflection on how an idea applies to our life as a congregation.
- 3) Please try, if you are online, to interact with our UUCGT Facebook page perhaps once a month.