

## Rabbi Report to UUCGT Board January 2016

### **Significant Moments**

- I join with the congregation in mourning the loss of Arline Howe
- Arline's death, at a congregation function and in dramatic fashion, made clear some areas where we as a community might improve in pastoral care and emergency (more below)
- Christmas Eve at the State Theatre was another great community-wide success for UUCGT
- We seem to be reaching some psychospiritual equilibrium in the wake of the dissolution of the previous board and appointment of the interim board.

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

Now that the interim board is in place, and we are moving out of "crisis" mode, I remain committed to asking organizational questions about how and why things unfolded as they did over the last several months. These questions appeared previously in my board report.

- Why was it so easy for trust to be broken between some members and the board and senior spiritual leader?
- How do we redefine/bring new understanding to the role of music director so we do not replicate the divided loyalty among some in the VE and the congregation as a whole?
- How do we engage our members in not only pointing to the board and staff as the source of correction, but also looking at why out of covenant behavior has flourished over the last months? I believe both ends of this spectrum need to be addressed: the organizational but also the ethical/spiritual.

### **Update on Major Activities/Goals**

**Pastoral Issues** – We are currently working to redefine Pastoral Care and its role in the community. One important learning from Arline's passing was that we, as a congregation, and I as clergy, do not have easy access to information that would have made that might easier, like a Five Wishes Form and emergency contacts. Pastoral Care will be taking up these questions going forward. Also, we are asking questions about first aid training and emergency protocols if we should be faced with a similar situation in the future. I have provided extensive pastoral care to members of the congregation over the last month.

**Safe Congregation Response Team** – The team will be meeting on January 20. At that time we will prepare to nominate Anne Marie Love as a new team member.

**Program Council** – The Program Council will meet again on January 24. Its early tasks are to choose a convener and create operating norms.

**Personnel/Staffing** – We have a truly amazing core team in place with Sheri, Susan and Sarah. We meet weekly as an operations team, set priorities, problem solve and offer each other support in getting the daily work of the congregation done.

**Committees** – Again in general, I am finding a balance with time spent with committees. Board, Sunday Services, Pastoral Care and SCRT are those in highest demand. The Committee on Ministry has been supportive and active this last month as well.

**Community** – Christmas Eve was a great success with over 450 people in attendance. The Reverend and the Rabbi also got the UU in front of people, with over 200 people participating. I will travel to Texas January 31 to February 5 to teach for the Academy for Spiritual Formation, “Silence, Chaos and Community: New Pathways in Grace” <http://academy.upperroom.org/events/five-day-academies>. I Skype-taught a class on holy vocations for an interfaith group in Chicago as well.

**Lifespan Experience:** I’ve launched a new monthly “lunch and learn” program and continue to offer office hours at Brew.

**Stewardship** – Judy Myers is leading us beautifully. The theme, calendar and basic outline of materials are completed. I will be actively supporting stewardship from the pulpit, as well as giving myself.

### **Question for the Board**

Please let me know what is useful for you in these monthly reports. This format was developed with the previous board.

### **A Final Thought**

From Jack Bloom, *The Rabbi as Symbolic Exemplar* (Haworth Press, 2002):

Our young [sic] rabbis need to know that rabbis do not belong to their congregations, no matter how long their tenure ... The rabbi belongs first and foremost to the rabbinic community, and it is to that community s/he must turn for support and nurturing ... They need islands of time and place where their symbolic exemplarhood is put aside and they can be simply human within the larger rabbinic family. In such settings they can have their inner resources replenished, returning to the fray refreshed and renewed.

Attending the OHALAH Association of Rabbis for Jewish Renewal Conference was a highlight, a joy, energizing and gave me a chance to speak about my work with UUCGT in such positive, loving ways.