

Highlights from the Last Month:

- Sunday services have been energetically attended
- Kudos to John Bailey and volunteers for a great All Music Service
- Planning for DLE's family leave
- Continuing conversations about how we might approach programming regarding US Presidential Election

Major Activities/2017 Goals

Congregational Care

We have been rich this year with the full complement of life in our community: birth, marriages, relationship endings, illness and death, in all of which I provided pastoral leadership. This included numerous home and hospital visits, notes and calls. We have a strong CC Team and are always seeking new members. In 2017, I want to continue to devote more time to face to face time with in person visits.

Social Witness

As you know, the Congregation's visibility in the larger community has been dramatically reduced in recent years; I would like to see the congregation reclaim some leadership in this area. Social Witness is the term used by the UUA to describe "method by which the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) comes to understand and act on the social issues of our times."¹

Social Witness is not the nimble, immediate process of "Social Justice Action," which seeks to respond quickly to issues, and which the UUA calls "Actions of Immediate Witness."

Instead Social Witness is the process by which we determine together – through study, presentations and congregational conversations – what our priorities are over the longer term. I have a general sense of what our congregational values are, but we have not had the deeper conversations and time to study and consider that will "re-plant" us as the go-to congregation for witness.

The UUA divides this work into two forms: Congregational Study/Action Issues and Statements of Conscience. Congregational Study/Action Issues (CSAIs) are issues selected by Unitarian Universalist member congregations for four years of study, reflection and action.

The current CSAIs are:

2016-2020 CSAI: The Corruption of Our Democracy

2014-2018 CSAI: Escalating Inequality

I would like to see the congregation take seriously the deeper work of consideration, study and carefully planning for engagement in the issues to we wish dedicate longer term energies. One thing we must consider is whether we want to choose local issues of conscience and/or engage

¹ <http://www.uua.org/statements/process>

with the larger denomination in the topics that have been chosen by democratic process of the UUA.

As you will read below, I am recommending that Board members (and Sunday services committee coordinators) read the UUA Guide called "The Real Rules," regarding our tax exempt status.

Denominational Affairs

The Heartland District is offering a webinar on Stewardship which I would commend for board members and any new to stewardship: "Are you involved in your congregation's annual budget drive for the first time? Join Dori Thexton to learn about the basics of coordinating a stewardship campaign. Find out how to recruit and train the canvassers, how to involve professional and lay leaders, and learn about resources to support your efforts": <https://www.midamericauua.org/events/eventdetail/654/-/webinar-stewardship-for-beginners>

I am looking forward to attending the Regional Assembly, Faith in Action: Finding Our Faith Partners," in April and the ministry days preceding. Information on the RA can be found here: https://www.midamericauua.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=89&Itemid=665

Sunday Services

As you know our attendance has been steady and strong, feedback overall is good but we are hearing two consistent issues: keep it to an hour and help us figure out how to engage the world in the post-election era.

As we discussed there is a fine line regarding political activity from the pulpit, but our members are increasingly asking for help navigating these times. Below I have added a link to the UUA's guide on this issue, "The Real Rules."

Operations Team

Please see the attached procedures, developed over a 10 month period by the Operations Team, for event cancelations due to weather.

Staff Resources

As you know Sarah and Denny welcomed baby Eileen, a little early, on Sunday December 11! At this point Sarah's plan for six weeks of leave. We wish them all the best and are delighted that everyone is healthy and happy.

Requests for Board Action:

1. Is there a board member who might want to attend the Regional Assembly?
2. I would ask Board members to review this document so that we are aware of the tax exempt status issues regarding politics: http://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/documents/washingtonoffice/real_rules.pdf

Cancelled Services / Events Procedures

It is the policy of UUCGT to cancel its services, programs and meetings on days when severe weather occurs.

Office: While public announcement of the closure of area local schools due to weather conditions may serve as an indicator, at the minister's discretion as head of staff in consultation with the Operations committee, the office may close.

Sunday Services: The decision to cancel a Sunday service will be made jointly by the Spiritual Leader, Sunday Services Committee Chair and the Board President.

Programs or meetings: The person or committee chair in charge of a program or meeting is responsible for the decision to proceed or cancel that activity; and is also responsible for communicating the cancellation decision to the office administrator and the attendees using the following Cancelled Services procedures:

Cancelled Services

- The office administrator or other staff shall change the office voice mail message to announce the cancellation.
- The office administrator or other staff will send an email regarding cancellation using the procedures to send the Flash/Beacon as listed in the Office Manual.
- A phone tree will be used to call those persons with no email to inform them of a cancellation. The Sunday Services Committee with direction from the Committee Chair will contact persons on their list and inform them of canceled services.
- A sign regarding cancellations will be placed on the door, if possible
- The website and Facebook page shall be updated with any cancellations by the office administrator or other staff.
- Local broadcast media shall be notified of any cancellations by the office administrator or other staff.

Canceled Meetings/Programs/Events

- The office administrator or staff will send an email regarding a cancellation using the procedures to send the Beacon listed in the Office Manual.
- The person in charge of event is responsible for contacting attendees by phone as best as possible.
- A sign will be placed on the door, if possible.
- The website and Facebook page shall be updated with any cancellations by the office administrator or other staff.

- If there is a large public program sponsored by UUCGT such as a concert, fundraising event, etc., the local broadcast media shall be contacted by staff and/or designated persons.

Date: _____