

Minister's Report to the UUTC Board

Focusing on Goals and Objectives

October 2023

Areas of Focus

Pulpit & Worship

Provide a meaningful worship experience for a wide variety of congregants.

Since my last Board meeting I have helped lead three Sunday services at UUTC (on the theme of "Heritage"). The first Sunday was on our obnoxious heretics (and others from religious liberty history), the second Sunday was on the Doctrine of Discovery and also highlighted themes related to Indigenous Peoples Day, and the final Sunday of the series was related to our family history and choosing our heritage to fit the futures we envisioned. Rev. Phillip Thomason from the congregation filled the pulpit on Oct. 22, and Christy and I attended (it was nice to experience worship!).

Community Building:

Facilitate and expand the connections which already exist between the UUTC congregants and the larger community.

I led two of the Thursday Men's Group (in-person) sessions.

Christy and I hosted an Auction dinner at our home on October 23.

I note that I was among several UUTC folks at the World Homeless Day ceremonies at the Courthouse gazebo. I also participated (singing with the Gay Men's Chorus) at the Coming Out Day event in Asheville (and a UUTC congregant was one of the featured speakers).

I attended the Rainbow Alliance meeting along with other UUTC members.

I greeted at the Power Up dinner distribution at St. Philip's church on Oct. 22. We'd encouraged connections through volunteer signup for helpers that day, along with UUTC being responsible for baking brownies for the take-out meals. Leftover dinners were going to be taken to Bread of Life.

I am working with various faith leaders to see about starting an Interfaith Thanksgiving prayer service on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. I've been a part of such events in past cities and it is a good way to bring people together in interfaith ways. When this is confirmed I will promote it vigorously to our members and friends.

Social Justice

Challenge the congregation to address social justice issues directly.

I have stayed involved with the Social Action team, though not at their October meeting due to schedule conflicts. Many of us were involved in Power Up or at the

Courthouse lawn, and we also connected there. This engaged several UUTC folks, including some of our newest members.

Target Goals

Pulpit & Worship: **Draw from other religious traditions in worship services at least twice a month.**

I have included Christian, Jewish and other perspectives, in the services I led. Readings in October also included Native American perspectives.

Community Building: **The minister will reach out to a variety of congregants to learn about the connections they have already built in the larger community.**

Continuing this process. The Social Justice survey has been getting returns. I look forward to finding more through this survey about congregants' connections.

Social Justice: **Explore the difference between social justice and social service in sermons and activities.**

I preached on this topic on April 16. It will recur in my services through the year, though the direct comparison was not a part of my October preaching I did weave social justice into sermon themes, perhaps most obviously the one on the Doctrine of Discovery in its systemic multi-century effects.

SPECIAL CEREMONIES:

I have prepared scripts and coordination for the Memorial Service for UUTC Member, Susan "River" Freeman to be held on October 28 at UUTC. I've recorded video of my portions of the ceremony.

OTHER ITEMS OF NOTE:

I'm away for the October Board meeting in order to travel to Ohio to officiate at our son's wedding on October 28.

I had success in relaunching "Soul Matters" discussions this month, there were a handful of us in the large classroom after church on Oct. 15 to discuss the packet.

I led a Board retreat for the Gay Men's Chorus and we have updated our website to include a DEI statement (diversity, equity, and inclusion). If you are curious, here is the link: <https://ashevillegaymenschorus.org/home/about/>

I loaned my electronic piano keyboard for use while our Steinway was taken apart for further improvement to it's action.