

Minister's Report to the UUTC Board

Focusing on Goals and Objectives

January 2024

Areas of Focus

Pulpit & Worship

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

Since the November Board meeting I have helped lead six Sunday morning services at UUTC, plus two holiday evening services (Dec. 10 "Grief at the Holidays" with Ginny Rush and others, and Dec. 24 "Candlelight Christmas Eve" with readers). Guest Sundays included UUA President Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt ("Seeds for the New Year" on Jan 14), Vanessa Cowie (Louisa May Alcott) on Dec. 17 (Christy and I attended with our family), and Friction Farm on Dec. 3. In addition there was the Solstice service coordinated by Janice Canon.

I note that we had several guest musicians, including (but not limited to) the Board's own Glenn Cockerham, Julie Berger, and Rachel Ploenzke. We also had special hand-outs for congregants in the form of peace cranes (made by Susan Bir).

Themes of "The Gift of Mystery" (Dec.) and "Liberating Love" (Jan.) allowed for a variety of biblical and secular texts, and of course the holidays bring in Hanukkah, Advent, Solstice, Christmas and the New Year's Burning Ceremony.

I appreciate the feedback from congregants after the service, whether in coffee hour or later in the week. In particular I received positive feedback from the January 14 sermon based off of Howard Thurman's "When the song of the angels is stilled" - a topic that first came to me from John Austin when he was picking music back in the Fall. The integration of Choir message, readings, hymns, story, and sermon was noticed and appreciated - I usually try for that coherence and this particular Sunday had all the pieces to make that goal possible.

Community Building:

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

I led three Thursday Men's Group (in-person) sessions, Hilly led the others, and we took a break at Christmas.

I led the College Walk UU group in a discussion of a Soul Matters reading in January (we did not meet during the holidays).

I Also attended Wonderful Wednesday (with the Sheriff), and soup-er Sunday.

Social Justice

Challenge the congregation to address social justice issues directly.

I have met with the Social Action team. UUTC members continue to be involved as volunteers in our partner agencies, though the garden project at the Haven is now in seasonal pause. Social Justice themes were woven into recent sermons.

I attended the Bread of Life Design Workshop on Jan. 25. There were three others from UUTC, including Board member, Quim Moya. This was a preparatory community leader's info and brainstorming session before they launch a capitol campaign later this year for the new facility.

I participated in the NAACP Religious Affairs meeting (zoom) in December.

Target Goals

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

I have included Jewish wisdom and Hanukkah song, African American religious songs and readings, Christian texts (especially the "lessons and carols" Christmas Eve) — and the Solstice service led by others was grounded in nature-based religion.

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.**

Continued work, and even during a recent home visit was able to chat about engagement in some of the social service organizations.

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

This goal was addressed previously. I will repeat some of the explanations in other ways in the coming year. Please advise if the Board believes this goal has been met, and/or if other goals will take the spotlight.

PASTORAL CARE

I met with people in their homes, at the office, and by phone. This included a visit to Tom Traywick when Tanne passed at home away during the holidays, while her body was still there. Some hoped-for visits did not occur as I was home sick with a cold for part of one week this month.

OTHER ITEMS OF NOTE:

Note that we had four new members in-person for the recognition ceremony at the end of December. There were a couple more who were away and will be recognized with a

future group. (Our next class starts in February). We have the largest Membership Team since I have arrived, with lots of energy.

I was invited to give the Invocation at the start of the City Council meeting this month. RK and I also noted the agenda item proposal for re-designation of South Broad Street properties across from the Library.

I attended an online meeting of the UUA Board Committee I serve (Religious Education Credentialing Committee).

I attended the Campus Vision Task Force meetings, including the Board special discussion/presentation and an extra zoom meeting to hear from another UU congregation's building process recently completed. Note I also made a connection at the Chamber of Commerce so we can learn more of the Boys and Girls Club expansion.

Christy and I had to postpone the "Appetizers and Desserts" event (from UUTC Auctions) due to forecast of bad weather.

Staff, payroll company and I are working to find a solution for errors on my W-2.