

# **Ministry Evaluation 2023**

## **Report of Results & Recommendation**

### **Introduction**

The UUTC Board Operating Guidelines require an annual review of the Ministry. The annual review process is linked to the goals, vision, and mission of the Congregation. The members of the Review Task Force appointed by the Board are Ian Cowie (President), Phillip Thomason (President-Elect), Trisha Wesley (Staff Member), Kelley Alwin (Member), and Phil Stewart (Member).

Any review of the Ministry includes both the Congregation and the Minister. The Congregation shares leadership with the Minister through participation in the life of the church and on the Ministry teams. The Minister holds the overall accountability for UUTC's Ministry, but the Congregation shares responsibility.

This report includes both a Summary and a Commentary to identify the most successful aspects of the UUTC Ministry as well as the areas for potential improvement. The Summary describes the results of the data analysis with charts and tables in an appendix. The Commentary describes the themes and important responses in each section, as interpreted by the Review Task Force. The Conclusions and Recommendations are the basis of the Action Plan drafted by the Minister and the Board leadership. A positive continuous improvement cycle is the overall purpose of the annual ministry review.

Confidential reviews of the results will be shared with the Board and with the Minister. A summary will be shared with the Congregation.

### **Background**

The sources used to develop the survey questions for the Member and Friend Annual Evaluation of the Ministry included the UUTC Bylaws, Organizational Structure, and Board Operating Guidelines. The 2020-2025 Vision Statement, UUA documents, and our Covenantal Agreement with the Minister were additional sources. The Annual Evaluation survey is included in an appendix to this report.

The Task Force reviewed each of the first six areas covered in the survey in the context of the performance of both the Minister and the Ministry Team responsible in that area:

- Pulpit and Worship: Worship Team
- Pastoral Care and Presence: Loving Hearts and Helping Hands
- Community Building: Membership Team
- Spiritual Growth
- Educational Leadership: Adult and Child Religious Exploration, Board of Trustees

- Social Justice: Social Action Team

The survey items in each of the six areas were rated by each respondent on a 1 - 5 scale. For ease in understanding the results in chart form, the results are reported in a 20-100 scale tied to expectations:

- 20 = performance very much below expectations
- 40 = performance below expectations
- 60 = neutral response
- 80 = performance fulfilling expectations
- 100 = performance exceeding expectations

Areas with average scores from 70-100 are considered relative strengths. Those with scores below 70 are considered possible improvement targets.

## **Survey Participation**

The Review Task Force mailed 200 surveys to Members and Friends. Forty-eight percent of the surveys were returned.

## **RESULTS**

Overall results in the six categories of Ministry in the survey are described. For a complete view of the overall results, see Chart 1 in the Appendix. Then, results within each of the categories are presented. Select items with relatively high response rates are highlighted (Chart 2). Table 1 lists items with relatively low response rates. Table 2 lists items with low response rates and scores below expectations.

## **Overall Results**

The average score across all 21 items was 74.9, suggesting that UUTC Ministry – the Teams and Minister – is approaching fulfillment of the Congregation's expectations. Average scores ranged from 65.4 (Pastoral Care & Presence) to 80.9 (Social Justice). Items highlighted show expectations are being fulfilled. Three items that scored low with little response should be considered as areas to address to improve our ministry.

*Commentary: Themes and important responses by section*

### **Pulpit and Worship (Worship Team)**

#### *Summary*

The average score across all items in this category was 74 indicating expectations are being met.

### *Highlighted Items*

Item # 4 Performs meaningful, engaging, and personalized rites of passage, including weddings, child dedications, new member rituals, and memorial services. This item was recorded at 79.2% indicating the performance was fulfilling expectations.

### *Themes for Pulpit and Worship*

*PW1: Comments reflected a great appreciation for services provided.*

“Quality of the sermons have increased tremendously, Rev Bob seems more confident, engaged and relaxed.”

“Appreciate the way the church honors other religions, sermons are well constructed with integrations of stories and music.”

*PW2: The minister is committed to the needs of the congregation.*

“Rites of passage, Rev Bob seems deeply committed to meeting the needs of those involved.”

*PW3: Sermons need to spark ideas or new perspectives.*

“We need to integrate more religions or philosophies - we need to engage people with the topics and help them think about how to apply them.”

### *Commentary for Pulpit and Worship*

Comments reflect a deeper appreciation of the weekly services being provided. Congregants' experiences with the minister are positive and productive. Though there is some concern the minister needs to assume more responsibility for worship services. A small number of respondents felt sermons need more relevance and to be more spiritually challenging.

## **Pastoral Care and Presence (Loving Hearts and Helping Hands)**

### *Summary*

The average score was 65.5. Three of the items recorded very positive response rates.

### *Highlighted Items*

Item # 8 Creates and manages lay pastoral care ministries, such as lay pastoral visits, lay grief groups, caring committees, etc. A high percentage (78.4%) of the respondents felt the minister was doing a good job.

### *Themes for Pastoral Care*

*PC1: The minister's level of engagement and availability is favorable.*

"Rev Bob is always generous with his time, responsive, and takes initiative. He is a good listener, and provides attention and caring, quietly and without need of recognition. Very active in pastoral care and community meetings."

"He has made progress in connecting 1:1 with others and is successful in moderating the Thursday men's group."

*PC2: The minister is engaged in the community.*

"He makes himself known to other churches and nonprofits in the area."

### *Commentary for Pastoral Care*

Based on data and comments, the minister is building stronger ties with congregants and the community. Of concern is the perspective in what pastoral care is being provided. Little was captured in the survey that highlights the work done by the caring team. Other areas in this category scored high marks when it comes to the minister being available for pastoral care, using community resources, managing pastoral care through visits, grief groups, caring committees.

## **Community-Building (Membership Team)**

### *Summary*

With an average score of 74, this category tied for fifth. The average response rate was 82%.

### *Highlighted items*

Item # 12 Ensures an offering of programs and services that affirm and serve across ages, races, ethnicities, religious backgrounds, abilities, sexual orientation, and gender identities. 80.7% of the responses felt the ministry was satisfied and fulfilling expectations.

Item # 13 Promotes a covenantal, thriving, welcoming, richly diverse congregation. 78.9% felt expectations were being met.

### *Themes for Community-Building*

*CB1: The minister provides a community for those involved with UUTC.*

“Substantial improvement in this area over the past year. There is a sense of community.”

“I am impressed by our ability to bounce back after Covid closure, in large part due to Bob.”

*CB2: More congregants need to be found in leadership roles.*

“The Minister and social action team need to build on previous achievements not just by participating but also in a leadership role. Leadership seems to be coming from members who propose ideas.”

#### *Commentary for Community Building*

The minister continues to build a stronger community. An area of improvement is to seek and retain new members. Building a deeper connection with more members and friends will grow the congregation.

### **Spiritual Growth**

#### *Summary*

An average score of 78.6 ranks it second in rankings. the area of strengths. Respondents strongly felt their spiritual needs were being supported and heard.

#### *Highlighted Items*

Item # 15 Helps create a heart centered church that understands that we all long to know and be known, love and be loved, serve and be served, celebrate and be celebrated. 79.7% of the responses felt this area was fulfilling expectations.

#### *Themes for Spiritual Growth*

*SG1: The minister is building a strong community centered around spiritual growth.*

“Rev Bob does a good job on creating a heart centered church and focuses on this in his sermons.”

“I hear good things about Rev Bob’s involvement at College Walk.”

*SG2: The ministry needs to be aware and include smaller groups among the congregation.*

"I would love more pagan celebrations, as part of a group or within a short reading."

"I am unlikely to attend small group guidance or faith journeys."

### *Commentary for Spiritual Growth*

Spiritual growth is strong throughout the congregants and continues to be a major part of people attending services. Some members would like some celebrations highlighted more. Others have little interest in some programs being offered.

## **Educational Leadership (Adult and Child Religious Exploration, Board of Trustees)**

### *Summary*

The average score across all items in this section was 76.7, ranking third in the six sections of the survey. 84% of the respondents felt UUTC ensures a strong CRE program.

### *Highlighted Items*

Item # 16 Ensures that the Adult Religious programs provide lifelong learning opportunities through adult programs, activities, readings and small group discussions. 78.9% of the responses felt this was being supported through the ministry.

Item # 17 Ensures that the UUTC Children's Religious Exploration program offers vibrant, engaging and innovative education that nurtures, provokes independent thinking, and encourages spiritual growth for children and youth of all ages. This item was highest overall recording 84.2% rating from responses.

### *Themes for Educational Leadership*

*EL1: CRE director is seen as leader for children's religious education.*

"I see leadership primarily from other members and from Kevin, rather than from the pastor."

*EL2: Leaders' development is needed within the church.*

"Evidently it works because we have strong leaders, but I am not aware of any leadership programs."

"Leadership development is a work in progress. This is a board responsibility, and all have fallen short."

### *Commentary for Educational Leadership*

To grow into a larger congregation and outreach to more people within our community, leadership roles need to be more defined and taught by the board. A leadership development and training program needs to be more prominent to nurture new leaders.

## **Social Justice (Social Action Team)**

### *Summary*

The average score across all items was 80.9%, the highest average rating for any of the categories. Response rates for the three items was 91%.

### *Highlighted Items*

Item #19 Often leads services that address social justice issues directly, challenging Members and Friends to a healthier relationship with uncomfortable truths. 81.3% felt expectations were being fulfilled.

Item # 20 Inspires and leads the Congregation to actively participate in social justice activities. 79.8% of the respondents liked the involvement level the minister was setting.

Item #21 Maintains a strong focus on justice issues in all areas of the Ministry. 81.6% of respondents were satisfied expectations were being fulfilled.

### *Themes for Social Justice*

*SJ1: The minister provides support for UUTC's ongoing social justice activities.*

"He seems to be concentrating on and showing up in the community for LGBT and social justice issues."

"We can do better as a congregation in taking a leadership role and Rev Bob can do more outreach."

*SJ2: UUTC should expand social justice actions to include more marginalized groups.*

"Need more equal time covering marginalized populations including people with disabilities or homelessness - need to be more welcoming of our Haven 'guests.'"

### *Commentary for Social Justice*

As one of the strongest areas for congregational feedback, particularly in the realm of LGBTQ+ support, there are noted opportunities for improvement to demonstrate

initiative in community involvement, specifically with disenfranchised or marginalized populations.

### **Conclusions & Recommendations**

The results from the 2023 Ministry Evaluation indicate strong support UUTC has in the areas of Social Justice, Spiritual Growth and Educational Leadership. We find ourselves involved in the community to make change but there are opportunities for improvement specifically with disenfranchised and marginalized populations. We are a heart-centered church with a strong focus on Spiritual Growth. This is supported by a growing educational effort directed by strong leadership especially through our children's programming.

Areas recorded below the average are Pulpit and Worship, Community Building and Pastoral Care and Presence. Congregants have an appreciation for weekly services. There is a positive and productive interaction with the minister. Our minister is seen as confident, engaged and relaxed. Members and friends appreciate the way the church honors other religions. Sermons are well constructed and integrated with meaningful stories and music. Some congregants still need services to be more relevant and spiritually challenging. More new faces are seen each week. We need to develop a stronger membership effort to retain new members.

The Pastoral Care and Presence category low score does not reflect on the outstanding work done by the LHHH Team. It more reflects a lack of awareness of the work being done by this team. Possibly the board needs to address this perspective and find ways to improve how friends and members can be better engaged with this work.



APPENDIX

Chart #1

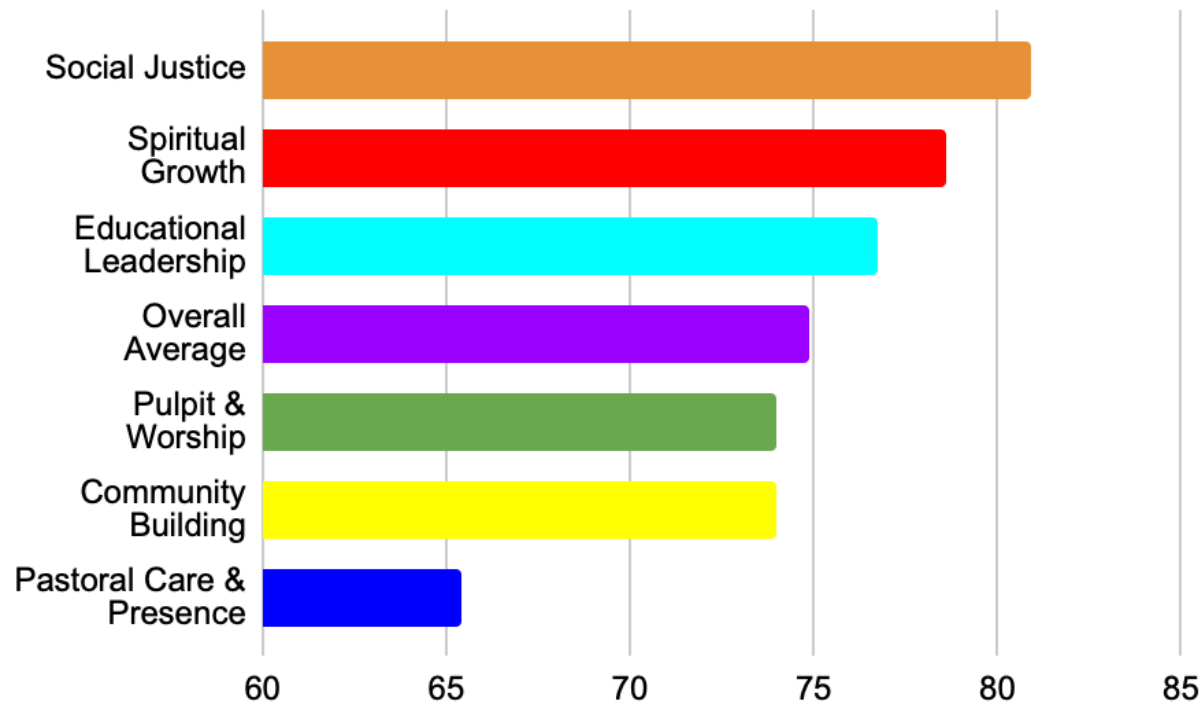


Chart 1: Category Average Scores		
Social Justice	80.9	
Spiritual Growth	78.6	
Educational Leadership	76.7	
Overall Average	74.9	
Pulpit & Worship	74	
Community Building	74	
Pastoral Care & Presence	65.4	
Average scores from 70-100 consider relative strengths; those with scores below 70 consider possible improvement targets		

## Chart 2: Average Score of Highlighted Items

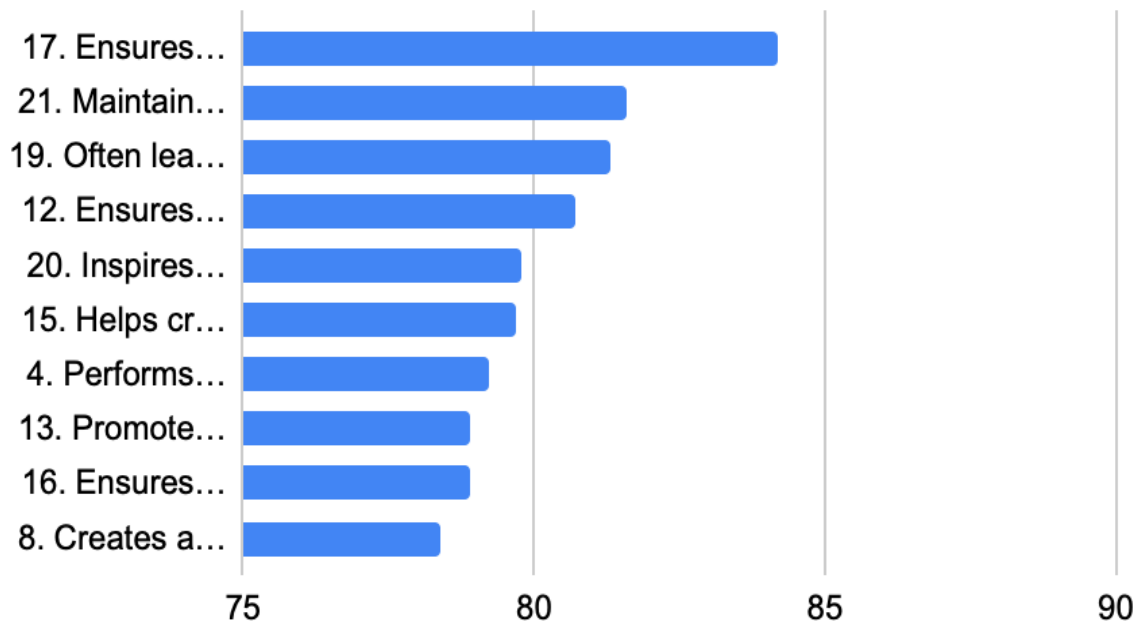


Chart 2: Average Score of Highlighted Items	
17. Ensures that the UUTC Children's Religious Exploration program offers vibrant, engaging and innovative education that nurtures, provokes independent thinking, and encourages spiritual growth for children and youth of all ages	84.2
21. Maintains a strong focus on justice issues in all areas of the Ministry	81.6
19. Often leads services that address social justice issues directly, challenging Members and Friends to a healthier relationship with uncomfortable truths	81.3
12. Ensures an offering of programs and services that affirm and serve across ages, races, ethnicities, religious backgrounds, abilities, sexual orientation, and gender identities	80.7
20. Inspires and leads the Congregation to actively participate in social justice activities	79.8
15. Helps create a heart-centered church which understands that we all long to know and be known, love and be loved, serve and be served, celebrate and be celebrated	79.7
4. Performs meaningful, engaging, and personalized rites of passage, including weddings, child dedications, new member rituals, and memorial services	79.2

13. Promotes a covenantal, thriving, welcoming, richly diverse congregation	78.9
16. Ensures that the Adult Religious programs provide lifelong learning opportunities through adult programs, activities, readings and small group discussions	78.9
8. Creates and manages lay pastoral care ministries, such as lay pastoral visits, lay grief groups, caring committees, etc.	78.4