

Minister's Report to the Board

November 2014

It has been an incredibly busy and high energy autumn around The Unitarian Church in Westport. The success of the Auction will be measured not just in terms of financial yield, but in terms of the experience of being together, having fun, and pulling off an elaborate and special event.

The Transition Team is very pleased with the way the first week of the 2nd Annual Book Sale went, and ticket sales for the Allison Weggener Recital are also going well. All in all the good news is that people are showing up and participating.

Since our last Board meeting was only 3 weeks ago, I have less to report than usual. Here's what I've got:

Committee Charters are coming along. Transition Team members are checking in with their assigned committees. Some have found it very easy to create a charter. Others are struggling and will need some coaching. Although we would love to have them all done for affirmation at the December Board meeting, I think January is more likely. The process of creating a charter can be clarifying for a group of people; in fact the process is more important than the outcome.

Sunday morning is also still a work in progress. After some tinkering and lots of explaining, I think we have arrived at a good place in terms of the order of service. The majority of feedback now is positive about the presence of children in the service. I wish you could have seen the sea of smiles on adult faces during the Child Dedication yesterday. Most of the people who were concerned about moving the announcements were unhappy with the service ending on a non-musical note. We have fixed that.

Something to think about – several Board members have expressed to me that they don't see why the Board members need to make the announcements on Sunday morning. At one point in recent history, it was thought to be important for Board members to be visible to the congregation. That is no longer much of an issue, and with the regular Town Hall meetings you have another way to be visible. I would love to have a conversation about whether the worship leaders should handle the greetings and announcements. The advantage, from my perspective, is that the

service would be smoother and the announcements could fit in a more seamless manner. What do you all think?

Our next project is to create a Sunday morning Sound Team. As the needs for sound on Sunday morning have gotten more complex, it has become clear that somebody other than Ed needs to have primary responsibility for Sound. We had a brainstorming session yesterday with 4 experts (including Steve Axthelm) and are embarking on a plan to simplify the current system, create clear written instructions, minimize access to the sound board that changes the default settings, train staff and Worship Associates in the proper use of microphones, and recruit a few more people to handle Sound on Sunday morning.

Now that the 'church year' is launched, the program staff will be turning our attention to one of the big holes in our current program: adult growth and learning. In the absence of a coordinator, we have allowed the program to lay fallow since last spring. We are hoping to put our heads together and find somebody who is willing to take on primary responsibility for the logistics of adult education. We have moved adult education into the auspices of the RE Council, thinking that the Council would provide some structural and experiential support for a new volunteer. I will keep you posted on what happens.

Staff: We have just started working with the new admin staff arrangement. Clear communication has gone out to the congregation via Soundings, the eblast, and the web site. Please, if people ask you how to get their events advertised or other questions in that realm, refer them to the FAQ on the website. Next month I will have a better sense of how this new configuration is shaking out.

As always, let me know if there is anything else you would like to know or have any questions.

Rev. Roberta