

## Senior Minister's Report to the Board of Trustees      April 2016

Our pledge drive is going very well. Reports from our visiting stewards are that many members are increasing their pledge, that we are seeing some return of those disaffected and the general sentiment of the congregation is very positive. I offer my hearty congratulations to all those involved. No one reported that they hadn't heard about the pledge drive this year. We still have some "cleanup" to do but I am confident we will reach our goal.

I have been working on several initiatives. I have completed the staff reviews of the directors and we have a good baseline on which to move forward. As will be reflected in the proposed budget I am asking for additional staff funding to restore positions to previous levels and to offer some very modest raises based on fair compensation and merit. The training of our new pastoral care associates will be completed this weekend and they will be assigned cases as needed. I have decided to change their titles to Pastoral Care Chaplains which better describes their training and their role. The use of the title chaplain is not restricted to the clergy and is in keeping with other religious practice. This larger team will be expanding our outreach to those shut in and offering a variety of support groups to our congregation and larger community. They will be formally commissioned on Sunday April 24<sup>th</sup> at the 11 am service.

We are currently training four new Worship Associates who will be commissioned in May. This team is already hard at work designing our summer worship program. The team is looking at new ways to provide a diverse worship experience on days other than Sundays. They have completed a regional training and we will continue that training over the summer with a workshop I will be leading on preaching.

Thanks to the NLDC I now have seven people who are willing to work on the Right Relations Covenant Task Force. I will be providing them a charter and initial background material next week. Their task will be to work with the congregation in learning about living in compassionate community and then working on a congregational covenant of right relations. This process will take over a year and will, hopefully, be ratified by the congregation in June 2017. As per your motion, I am working closely with the COM on this initiative. We will be using some outside training.

Finally, I have asked Mark Ewert, one of four UUA stewardship consultants (he works on the same team as Barry Finkelstein) to join us June 11 & 12 for a "Next Steps Weekend" which will help us with our financial planning over the next church year. He will want to meet with the board and staff as well as attend worship. More details on this soon. Mark is highly regarded. You can learn more about him and the program here: <http://stewardshipforus.com/consultant-mark-ewert/>

Thank you all for your dedication to the future of our congregation.

Respectfully submitted, Rev. Dr. John T. Morehouse