

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

February 2021

Ends Report:

*1.1.2 Embraced in a community of spirit and love where they can open themselves to pastoral care in times of joy, sorrow and transition, and are committed to the well-being of one another;*

Given that I have already reported on our priority ends 1.2.4 and 1.3.3, I have chosen to methodically report on our remaining ends as time permits. This month is the first of those on – going reports.

*Executive Interpretation:* I take this end to mean that, given our congregation's covenant to help one another and love one another, and our UU principle of Faith in the Inherent Worth and Dignity of every person, this first end need adequately represents our covenant and principles. Spirit and love are ample theological categories for us to be a part of; Spirit, by intention left open, refers to that greater meaning in our life, and love being the action of that Spirit in our community. This end specifically calls on us to individually and collectively to avail ourselves and participate in a ministry of pastoral care which sustains us in times of joy, sorrow and transition. This ministry of pastoral care implies that we care for each other's well-being.

*Report on the End:* We are moving towards this end with purpose and direction. We are fortunate enough to have in place an active and well-trained group of Pastoral Care Chaplains, who are under the direction of our Community Minister for Pastoral Care, Rev. Jim Francek. Jim serves us as a professional in a volunteer capacity, being an ordained chaplain at Yale New Haven Hospital in Bridgeport and a long-time group dynamics consultant. Jim and I have put in place a lead team of three other lay chaplains who manage our pastoral care ministry. The chaplains meet monthly for on-going training and sharing. (We have strict rules about confidentiality with the chaplains and they do not share personal details of congregants they are seeing except as needed with either Jim or myself). The chaplains are currently involved with over 40 different congregants on an on-going basis. In addition, we actively solicit new chaplains to replenish our corps. Recently the chaplains have been completing their second rounds of phone calls to every member and friend in our congregation.

In addition to this very successful ministry, we have a secondary group of people who respond to needs for food, rides and other necessary services through our "Helping Hands Network" which is administered by Mary Jane Cross and Beth Cliff. Our Shawl Ministry is a good example of this lay caring. We also have an active Addiction and Recovery Ministry offering programs and support groups for those in need.

Finally, the ministers and other staff meet weekly to hear of and process pastoral concerns of the congregation at large. We are fortunate to have four ministers on staff, Rev. Ed Thompson, Rev. Jim Francek, Intern Minister Kim Warman and myself. A large multi-minister staff allows for a diversity of responses. Our congregation has become intentionally a caring community

especially over the last six years. We continue to look for ways to improve and train our chaplains.

## Limitations Report

*3.1 The Senior Minister shall not cause or allow any practice, activity, decision, or Congregational circumstance that is unlawful, in violation of professional ethics or commonly accepted business practices, or inconsistent with our values.*

I am also reporting on Limitation Policies that pertain to my role as chief executive. I have already reported on 3.6 and 3.9 to this Board this year, so I am reporting on 3.1.

*Executive Interpretation:* My interpretation of this limitation policy is fairly straight forward. I shall not cause or allow any practice that is unlawful or that violates my professional ethics as specified in the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association Guidelines which I am professionally obligated to follow. Nor shall I allow any practice that is violation of commonly accepted business practices or that is inconsistent with our values.

*Report:* I am in compliance with this limitation policy. All of our business decisions regarding soliciting donations and expending funds is in compliance with best and legal practices of non-profits organizations in general and UU Congregations in particular. Our protocols on personnel is reviewed annually by our HR Team, (consisting of a retired HR Director and Labor Attorney). I provide annual staff reviews and we hire and dismiss employees following our personnel protocol and legal requirements.

Our accounting is reviewed by both our Treasurer and is audited every year by an independent accounting firm. Their latest report is available for any trustee who would like a copy. Signatories on accounts follow best practices and have checks in place to protect us from fraud. Each staff member and trustee is also protected under our general insurance policy "Board and Directors Insurance" rider. Monies received are reviewed by our accountant and a lay person and deposited as soon as possible. All monies received after hours goes into the slot of our safe.

My conduct as a minister is outlined in the Professional Guidelines of the UUMA and are available here should you care to review them:

[https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.uuma.org/resource/resmgr/docs/uuma\\_guidelines\\_rev-7-2020-s.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.uuma.org/resource/resmgr/docs/uuma_guidelines_rev-7-2020-s.pdf)

The other professionals on the staff have their own letters of agreement which spell out their roles and limitations.

Fortunately, we have several very experienced congregants and trustees who help us with best practices in our business and staff relationship. I want to especially thank Steve Grathwohl, our treasurer and Catherine Onyemelukwe preceding him and Bob Trefry for their valuable professional expertise and oversight.

Respectfully Submitted, Rev. Dr. John Morehouse