

Senior Ministers Report to the Board of Trustees

September 2021

1.1.1 Deepened spiritually in worship that guides them in individual and communal responses to the sacred; enriched through expanded religious understanding, and uplifted, sustained and transformed by living out UU principles.

Executive Interpretation: I take this to mean that our individual and collective understanding of Spirituality grows through a broader understanding of religion and that we are strengthened emotionally and spiritually by our education and worship within the context the context of our shared UU Principles.

Report:

As mentioned during our retreat I think we need to increase our efforts in this area. While our worship and music program has been good, we have been challenged by the pandemic to improve our hybrid experience of worship. That challenge is most often felt in our music ministry which relies on in person singing and performance. Ed has done an amazing job keeping some semblance of our choral program moving forward but we have slipped in the breadth and depth of what we can feel spiritually. Also, with the loss of the organ, we are not able to achieve the notable power of that instrument to inspire and connect us to the Holy. The proposal for a new organ would go a long way to lifting our spirits.

Also, until recently, we have not had a coordinated Adult Faith Formation Ministry. Our Soul Matters Sharing Circles have been a great addition to our spiritual life, allowing individuals to meet and share more deeply than the previous didactic model of the small group ministry.

Following this growing connection, I have asked Linda Lubin to serve as Coordinator for a new Adult Faith Formation Team. The Team consists of Linda, Jamie Forbes, Tom Hearne, Kim Warman and Laurie Anderson (a new member). We are currently setting up 9 new course offerings throughout the year. We will be introducing this Team and their syllabus on September 26 in time for our Welcoming Service and Expo. The Vision and Mission of this new ministry is:

Vision Statement

The Vision of Adult Faith Formation is to inspire and support individual spiritual growth in connection with others through life-long learning.

Mission Statement

We are committed to the exploration of shared questions, joys, and concerns that enable us to grow within, among, and beyond ourselves. We create programs that will engage and deepen the whole person: body, mind, and spirit, through education, experience, and ritual. We embrace the wisdom and essence of multiple world religions, belief system, arts, and philosophies. Together we develop the three sacred practices of listening - to each other, the world, and our deepest selves.

As you can see, this Team's Mission Statement directly helps us move towards 1.1.1. I am very excited about this prospect.

Overall, I think by the end of this church year we will be moving towards this End in new and exciting ways. I heard clearly from many, including you all, that we need to focus more on spiritual uplift and less on messages of social action in our worship services. I am intending to do exactly that. Hopefully, we will see results as the year unfolds.

Respectfully Submitted, Rev. Dr. John Morehouse