

Senior Minister's Report to the Board of Trustees

January 2023

Activities of Importance

While it may be too soon to tell, we seem to have turned a corner in our congregation. We successfully navigate the name change through the first vote. I am not anticipating any difficulties with the second vote especially since the other vote we are taking is to ordain Carrie McEvoy to the UU Ministry! Remember that Carrie served on the BOT before dedicating more of her time to ministerial formation. She is truly one of our own and I am sure that we are all proud of this moment.

We have many new faces on Sunday including new families. I believe our efforts at attracting new families through the media (thanks to Beth) and a dynamic Family Faith Formation Ministry (thanks to Nate and his team) is leading families to our door. Worship continues to be dynamic and engaging. I remind you all that your presence on Sunday is a big attraction, not just the announcements but your presence and active welcoming of new faces. It is proven that a welcome from the lay leadership has a special effect on newcomers. Please make a point of coming on Sunday and welcoming new people. We have some great momentum now, let's keep it going.

I think we are in a good place to begin the Appreciative Inquiry process. I wouldn't worry too much about the idea of a new vision overtaking the original purpose of this effort. It is a long way from believing in our future to crafting a new vision statement. Having done both AI and mission/vision setting in the past I can tell you they are quite different. IF we decide to revisit our mission/vision our AI program will only strengthen that process. Our consultant is clear on the original purpose of engaging in the work: to provide a means to better communication, healing and resilience.

To that end, I along with the Adult Faith Formation Team have launched a three part series on "Centering Our Gifts" which is a curriculum from the UUA. We brought in an outside facilitator last Sunday and we will continue the work for the next two Sundays. I see this a preamble to the AI work and a great way to build some positive energy in the congregation. It may also be useful in helping our Leadership Development Team with their work.

Our Social Justice Council is working well as we pivot from staff leadership to lay leadership. The Council is now responsible for identifying what causes we will support and connecting our share the plate with our Voices Café recipients. We won't be as involved as we once were in some causes, but we will be involved in causes that we can sustain.

Pastoral Care continues to be a source of connection and care. The chaplains are focused on connecting with people we have not seen for some time. I, along with the lead team of the PCC, continue to offer education and support.

Soul Matters groups are not doing as well as I would like due to a change in volunteer leadership. Ruth has taken over some of the clerical end of that work, but I have been unable to find a new leader to coordinate groups. This is a deficit for us.

I am also concerned about Stewardship. Elena and Sam are doing a great job reimagining our pledge drive. We will ask each committee chair to canvass their own team. We will still need a group of people to make phone calls. Will the board help?

We have close to a full delegation for General Assembly in Pittsburgh. Next month I will be asking you to appoint the delegates so they can begin the pre-work. We are allowed eight delegates.

Overall, we are engaged and improving. Let's keep the positive energy going.

Respectfully Submitted, Rev. Dr. John Morehouse