

Minister's Report June/July 2020

TO DISCUSS:

1. Shared Ministry Assessment and Developmental Goals: I would like to initiate conversation around the need to assess our shared ministry and re-evaluate developmental goals this year. It's a long-term project, but I am hoping to tie it in to much of what the church does, so I want to get the brainstorming and timeline drafting underway.

2. Programming Supplements: With the unprecedented situation in which we find ourselves, doing this church year (at least primarily) online, I really think it is worth the investment to find some ready-made curriculum. The way we are doing church currently puts a serious strain on my energy/time as well as Gay Lynn's, and having ready-to-go content will be a huge asset to both of us:

RE for Children/Youth (Total cost: \$435, from RE program budget):

- Elementary: CartUUns curriculum, using Pixar shorts (<10 minute films; will need access to Disney+ for this as well, but we think there enough in the congregation that we don't need to purchase one for church) 32 sessions: \$75
- Junior High: Crossing Paths (multifaith program similar to Neighboring Faiths, developed by Soul Matters) 10-month program with 4 sessions every month. Cost: \$210
- High School Youth: Soul Matters Youth Group Package- 10 monthly packets with materials for four sessions around a theme in each. Cost: \$150

Adult Faith Formation: Faith Forward "Intro" programming (Inquirers, Roots and Beyond Inquirers, see attachments) 15 sessions total: \$200

3. COVID rollover of professional expenses: Due to COVID preventing me from attending a couple of conferences and General Assembly, I have some professional development expenses left over. I used a good bit of the overage to "pay forward" spiritual direction for the coming year as well as purchasing some clerical garb (for protests, city council meetings, and other acts of public witness where things like that lend gravitas) but there was some left, less than \$500 I would guess. I would like to ask the board to roll over any remaining professional expense funds into this year's allocation, or adjust my professional expenses for this fiscal year only to compensate.

NOTES:

Northwoods YouTube channel: We have one! [Check it out!](#) Rusty has uploaded most of the music videos, and I'm working on getting our original content (sermon, reading and meditation videos I've done, Time for All Ages videos from me, etc.) up every week for easier and more accessible viewing. For now, we also continue to archive the full services on Vimeo.

Website Rebuild: In progress! Jamie has done most of the front-end work and is now working on transferring the content. This will take a while but we are hoping to have it ready to launch by Ingathering in mid-August.

Book Group: I am going to be leading a book group to discuss How to Be an Anti-Racist by Ibram X. Kendi that will begin this week. Hoping that the group will want to keep reading books of this nature but maybe with other facilitators? I have plans for fall that will keep me pretty busy.

Programming Plans for Fall: My plan right now is to lead two programs: one on Spiritual Practices (free materials from Faith Forward) and Harvest the Power (Lay Leadership Faith Formation, no cost) possibly their Inquirers series as well, to offer more robust newcomer information and faith formation programming in virtual church time, where informal education is harder to come by.

Meetings: I continue to meet regularly with Worship Arts, Membership, Stewardship and now Leadership Development, which is doing some particularly good work right now. Membership is still trying to better capture visitor information but we have had several online-only folks interested in membership and look to have another full Pathways class in August.

Art shows! Did the first one, and the second one is Aug. 28. 9 performers/artists, and at least 17 participant screens, many with 2-4 people watching. That feels like a win.

Worship: Tweaking our script, playing with pre-worship slideshow (great!) and post-worship chat (work in progress) FALL 2020 PLANS ARE MADE!!! (See separate PDF)

Text Reminders: Jamie has set up some text reminders for folks who'd like another way of getting info and reminders to come to church on Sunday 😊

Time Off: I will be taking two more weeks of leave starting next week (July 28-Aug. 10), which will be a combination of study and personal leave. I'm a bit concerned about how I will manage to take all of my allotted time this year, as I have 11 study leave days and 13 vacation days left to take before Jan. 1, which translates to about a week per month, which I worry is far too much absence from regular church life right now.

Hope Rises (Responsive Reading By John A. Buehrens, Rebecca Parker)

Hope rises.

It rises from the heart of life, here and now, beating with joy and sorrow.

Hope longs.

It longs for good to be affirmed, for justice and love to prevail, for suffering to be alleviated, and for life to flourish in peace.

Hope remembers.

It remembers the dreams of those who have gone before and reaches for connection with them across the boundary of death.

Hope acts.

It acts to bless, to protest, and to repair.

Attachment 1: Faith Forward Details

From visitor to member. The first steps...

Faith Forward: From Visitor to Leader is a guided path for Unitarian Universalists to follow in your congregation. The Intro package includes the first steps on the Faith Forward CORE Path - the Inquirers Series, Roots, and Beyond Inquirers. For everything you need to not only welcome and integrate visitors, but also to develop engaged and connected members and leaders, check out the Faith Forward Path package.

Newcomers arrive at our doors seeking a path to connect and get involved, and these classes respond to this need. The Inquirers Series is nine sessions, each addressing a topic about Unitarian Universalism or your congregation, which are repeated on rotation throughout the year. Roots is a one-session, fun and informative overview of the history of our faith. Beyond Inquirers builds on the overview of the Inquirers Series, delving deeper into who we are as Unitarian Universalists and how we do church.

The goals of the Inquirers Series, Roots, and Beyond Inquirers are:

- Make our church values and culture transparent and known to newcomers, so that they may make an informed decision about membership in our church
- Acquaint newcomers with church staff, ministers, and lay leaders
- Establish a “safe space” for newcomers to learn more about the church in the form of a regularly scheduled small group designed for their need
- Introduce newcomers to the history of our Unitarian Universalist faith