

November 2022 Minister's Board Report

Dear Board members,

In recognition of the work that needs to be done to get our committees and systems running smoothly, I will be delaying my sabbatical originally planned for Spring. Instead, I will be using some of my vacation days, taking time off from January 10-31 for a much needed rest.

As a reminder, here are the Board goals as they were laid out at our retreat.

Considering and acting upon our commitment to the 8th Principle and its emphasis on dismantling oppression and promoting racial diversity, the Board articulates the following goals for the 2022-23 congregational year:

- 1. Structure and fully populate (with lay leaders) healthily functioning committees throughout our congregational system.*
- 2. Hire a Religious Education Coordinator (one-year position) soon, and set up the permanent DRE search committee.*
- 3. Recruit, ignite, and support five or more people working in Welcoming & Engagement Ministry (Membership).*
- 4. Schedule and lead a minimum of two Program Council Meetings.*
- 5. Set up and support an 8th Principle Accountability Committee.*

Please continue to work your liaison areas of the "Committee Heads & Members" sheet that need help. If you need guidance or help in doing this work, I'm very glad to be of assistance. Feel free to make an appointment.

Staffing continues to be a concern. We have the RE Coordinator position, Nursery attendant, and bookkeeper to consider.

I met with some people who have been doing the welcoming on Sundays. At the moment, Patrick Mannion has been willing to take a leadership role, Lesley Mahaffey is willing to do visitor data entry (into our new Breeze system) and help coordinate the New to UU class. Mary Botts can serve as a liaison to our small group ministry program, and Jocelyne Shiramoto and Linda Duarte Wolf have agreed to work as Visitor Follow-up Coordinators. There are still a few roles that will need leadership and much team building is left to be done. As I said in my previous report, re-activating our Welcoming Ministry will be instrumental this year in meeting the needs of our newcomers.

Finally, I have been doing education with staff and various committees about congregation size transition and growth goals. You'll find the document I created for this on the next page. Please look it over when you get a chance. As the document notes, UUCF has been in Transition size—between Pastoral and Program size—for five years or more. Eventually, to move into Program size, not only will our membership number need to increase, but we will need further staffing and very robust, healthy committees. Growth is a choice for a congregation, not happenstance; it's attainable, but we will have to make decisions to nourish it.

In gratitude,

Rev. Dr. Jason Cook

UU Church Size Dynamics (Inspired by the work of Alice Mann & the UUA)

Pastoral Size:

76-140 membership

Pastor-centered (focus is on minister as personality, giver of pastoral care, knowing everyone personally etc.)

Organization: low key, flexible

Governance: key families still at center of decision making, but new people coming into leadership

Pastor at center of all programming and new member incorporation; growth often depends on popularity of clergy

Dominant congregational theology/philosophy/worship is primarily geared toward those present (i.e., Humanist, liberal Protestant, Pagan, etc.)

Congregation believes itself to be friendly, but may be so mainly with each other'

Efforts toward hospitality are often unconsciously geared toward people "just like us"

Accessibility efforts are minimal and usually in response to the needs of a few core families (i.e. wheelchair ramp will be installed if long-time church elder needs it but not in anticipation of newcomers)

Congregation is comfortable: everyone pretty much knows everyone else; newer members are fairly infrequent so there is time to assimilate them into the current culture

Conflicts arise over minister's attention

Transition Size:

141-224 membership (where UUCF has been for a few years now)

Divided focus (is it the pastor or the programming at the center?)

Governance: key families still play a role, but several newer people have come into leadership positions

Minister stretched—at cusp of needing additional staff, but resources may not be there

Time demands on clergy grow oppressive with growing size: hard on spouse & family: must delegate or risk burn-out

Pastoral care must be shared in an active way by the congregation with the minister; the job is too great for any one person

Dominant congregational theology/philosophy/worship begins to invite those present to consider how it might be to share the space with individuals holding very different beliefs but nonetheless adhering to the congregation's mission

Welcoming/hospitality in transition: congregation is dedicated to growth but concerned about the changes around them; there is some anxiety about no longer knowing one another well

Accessibility efforts begin to broaden a bit (ramps, pulpit accessibility, hearing devices in the sanctuary, etc.)

Welcoming efforts begin to shift to being more broad, resulting in different ages/races/disabilities, etc. starting to attend

Conflicts arise over inclusion, information/communication, attention of clergy

Program Size:

225-800 membership

Group centered (small group ministry): activity & program groups connect and assimilate new members, nurture friendships

Clear mission statement unifies diverse programs

Governance: Committees thrive and hold power; Board provides "big picture" oversight/vision

Minister shifts to administrator/delegator; team leader; recruiting, planning, evaluating, coordinating

Communication needs high

Minister is motivator, trust-builder, agent for consensus

Multiple staff, lay and professional, provide program support

Lay leadership vital

Organized pastoral care systems led by clergy but primarily enacted by lay people

Needs reliable systems to keep track of members, programs

Welcoming efforts are organized and geared toward the congregation's mission, meaning a wider spectrum of people of all identities find the congregation more attractive

Accessibility efforts are intentional and implemented in advance of attendees' immediate needs (i.e. ramps are installed before anyone in a wheelchair attends, etc.)

Prevailing congregation theology/culture/worship style is one of inclusion: acknowledgement of the spectrum of beliefs present, recognition of various religious holidays, resources

Conflicts are over resources and priorities