

Minister's Board Report
September 2022

Greetings Board members!

I'm delighted to welcome some of you on (B)board and greet once again our returning Board members. The new congregational year begins NOW—and it feels good to mark this time with the new optional mask policy created by our COVID Safety Task Force as their last act before disbanding. We are so grateful to the work of everyone involved in that task force—including those of you on the Board. It will be the Board's work to consider in coming months how best to meet future issues of safety and wellness.

As we begin this year, one thing in particular is on my mind: Engagement Ministry. Historically, Engagement Ministry at UUCF was centered around developing new members, but thanks to the efforts of leaders in recent years, it now is a larger umbrella that includes our small group ministry program (recently expanded beyond Chalice Circles to include Soul Matters groups, Community Circles, and Wisdom Circles). Engagement Ministry also encompasses new member events (such as our New to UU lunches), and Welcoming Ministry (Greeters and Welcome Table). Since the pandemic began, Engagement Ministry has been working primarily (and understandably) in “emergency mode,” but we are now looking to begin a new chapter, involving greater participation in all areas. We are, at last, positioned so that we can begin truly welcoming newcomers into our community—and re-connecting with those we have lost touch with in recent months or years.

My suggestion would be that the Board utilize its power to call together all those who have been working in some capacity in recent months (or even in past years) under the Engagement Ministry umbrella. At that gathering or before, leadership needs to be identified and responsibilities made clear. While many people have been working in these various areas, it's now time to work toward a “big picture” approach. Visitors are being warmly welcomed; now we have to figure out how to make sure their information gets into our systems so that there can be appropriate follow-up. We've been delighted to welcome some new families to our services and RE programs, and I know we would hate for any of them to fall through the cracks. We show our love for others and commitment to diversity by making pathways to membership readily available and accessible.

The hunt for our one year RE Coordinator is another top priority. We want to make sure that the hard work done with Rev. Judy Tomlinson continues to shape the program we want to build for the future.

Finally, I'm working on building up more formalized pastoral systems for UUCF; I envision a “caring network” that will include a few sub-categories (lay pastoral listeners, meal train, communications, and such).

We have an exciting year ahead of us; I can feel it. It will be a lot of work, too; there are systems to be re-created or built from the ground up in our new space in this “new” world. I’m confident this Board is up to the challenge—and, unlike the Board work throughout the early months of the pandemic, I think we will be able to see the joyous results of some of this work right way.

In faith, love, and gratitude,

Rev. Dr. Jason Cook