

November 2023 Minister's Board Report

Greetings, Board members,

As we move closer to the end of the calendar year, UUCF is getting busier. We have a variety of holiday activities coming up in December, many of which are designed to help people get through what is often a difficult time. We will also likely welcome many visitors to UUCF for our very popular Winter Solstice service, and the new "Blue Holiday" contemplative service I am adding for the first time this year (on Tuesday, Dec. 19). The question is: do we have a welcoming process in place for these "special" services, to really welcome in newcomers?

Our volunteer drive has gone incredibly well with getting people to sign up for the various areas. The challenging part is ahead: following up with, training, and integrating those volunteers into our committee work. I will be leading the Caring Committee kick-off in December, and encouraging other committees to reach out to the names on their lists—but your encouragement would also be appreciated with your respective committees. "Kick-off" committee events—especially with food—and clearly defined roles for people to hook into are a great recipe for revitalizing stale committees.

Our last New to UU class had about a dozen participants and yielded five new members. Our next New to UU gathering will take place in Spring.

UUCF's community visibility has been high this Fall. The approximately \$12,000 (and counting) we have raised for Planned Parenthood is being featured in a campaign to their email list for others to participate, matching grant style, sending the UUCF name out to thousands of households. A few UUCFers attended PP's big annual banquet where UUCF received a lot of attention from Planned Parenthood staff and Board members. I've also been active in Clergy for Choice, a group dedicated to protecting reproductive rights. Last week, I spoke on behalf of CLUE (Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice) at the Disney Workers press conference in front of Anaheim City Hall, to celebrate their most recent victory. UUCF has supported CLUE since I began my ministry here, and many of our friends from Unite Now were also at this event. At these events, I often look around and realize that I am one of a very small pool of clergy who support these progressive causes. Sometimes I am the only one, which illustrates how important UUCF is in the larger community.

Looking at the next few months, our most immediate challenges involve staffing: a bookkeeper, staff teachers, a youth coordinator, and (possibly) custodial help.

I'm grateful to all of you for your work here at UUCF. My engagement with the larger community reminds me that we do make a difference, whether we are always aware of it or not.

In gratitude,

Rev. Dr. Jason Cook