

Report to the Board  
of the First Unitarian Church of South Bend, Indiana  
Rev. Chip Roush  
08 March 2023

## INFORMATION

We get three delegates at the General Assembly in June—three votes on every ballot. Unfortunately, there are no funds put aside to help the voters attend the GA, but they do have the right to represent our congregation as elections are held and topics discussed. We can charge them to vote a certain way, or ask them to vote their conscience as they hear the subjects debated. There are often zoom sessions and/or recorded orientations for delegates to learn about the processes and topics (I don't think you have to be a delegate to attend these). Louise Williams asked me about serving as a delegate. I don't know if anyone else is interested.

GA will be in Pittsburgh, PA, June 21-25, 2023. Let's get a group to attend!

## SCHEDULE

In March, I will take a long weekend of study leave: Friday through Monday, March 17-20.

In April, I will take a short vacation, from Thursday through Sunday, April 27-30.

## PERPETUAL CALENDAR

March

Quarterly update on Endowment disbursements

April

Board determines slate for new Nominating Committee to be elected at congregational meeting

Bi-Annually in odd-numbered years File Indiana Business Entity Report. Available at [www.in.gov/sos/business/2426.htm](http://www.in.gov/sos/business/2426.htm) Deadline April 30 (odd years)

May

Approve budget to be presented at congregational meeting

Works with Administrator to send out official notice of annual meeting, including proposed slate of officers and any other set items at least 10 days prior to the meeting.

President and Secretary conduct annual congregational meeting (typically 3rd Sunday)

File form 103 & 104 with St. Joseph County Assessor. Get form online at [www.in.gov/dlgf](http://www.in.gov/dlgf) - look for form link. No reminder notice sent; no online filing at this time. Deadline May 15

## QUESTIONS FOR NEXT MONTH

Please consider raising the limit on the church credit card. I was trying to pay for a utility bill from the Ministerial Discretionary Fund, and the card was declined. It had been a busy month for MDF disbursements, and I signed up for two short classes, but it seem like a needlessly low limit.

## ACTIVITIES

From Monday, January 30, through Sunday, February 26, 2023, there were four weeks; my contract calls for an average of at least twelve units per week, for a total of 48+ units (where a unit is defined as a morning, an afternoon, or an evening of work, in general).

Subtracting 2 units for the end of my January Sabbatical, and 6 units for study leave, that leaves a contractual minimum of 40+ units of work. Over that February time period, I recorded 44 units:

### Sunday Services (13 units)

- Planning & presenting worship services on Sunday (3)
- Worship Arts Committee meeting (1)
- interfacing with Sound Techs and Zoom (Co-)Hosts
- reviewing drafts of orders of service prior to printing
- uploading sermons to YouTube, Facebook, and congregational website
- Sermon Sounding Board (weekly; 4)

### Pastoral Care & Counseling (7 units)

- Phone calls & texts (7)
- Home, hospital, etc., visits (3)
- Visits at church, restaurant, etc. (4)
- Eco Grief Session (1)
- Care Committee meeting (1)
- Buy gift cards from Marathon or Martin's or both (1)
- weekly Thursday afternoon Zoom Gathering (4)

### Social Justice (5 units)

- Faith In St. Jo. County trip to Indianapolis (1)
- planning calls/zoom for Indy trip (4)
- debrief call after Indy trip (1)
- a few conversations, rounded down to 0 units

### Associational Ties (4.5 units)

- meet with Mentees (3)
- Chicago Area Liberal Ministers (CALM) at Unity Temple (1)
- attend zoom session with UU Ministers Assoc (UUMA) Board, staff (1)
- submit recommendation letter for colleague (1)
- Co-Moderator of UUMA Facebook page (approx. daily)

### Membership (4 units)

- Office Hours (7)
- New Member class (1)
- Popi-Con (1)
- emails & call from members & friends

### Communications (2.5 units)

- submitting items for Chirp! each week
- putting informational posts on church Facebook page & website
- adding pages, content to our website
- compiling Board Report
- miscellaneous email, not included in other categories

Staff Supervision (2 units)

weekly meetings (4); ongoing training

Governance (2 units)

Board meeting (1), communications & follow-up tasks from Board  
Committee on Ministry meeting (1)

Spiritual Development of Congregation (1 unit)

Unraveling Whiteness class (1)  
conversations with congregant(s)

Marketing / Publicity (1 unit)

posting upcoming services on Facebook, Twitter, our website  
meet with Louise for FB marketing (2)  
note: the 70th Anniversary Celebration could also go here,  
but I've included it in Spiritual Development, above

Public Religious Face of the Congregation (1 unit)

South Bend 2045 interfaith conversation at 1st Presby. (1)  
theological conversations with folks who ask for gift cards (1)  
emails from local students / organizations

Adult RE (0.5 units)

planning future book groups  
*Chillin' with Crayons* on zoom (1)  
ad hoc conversations

Children & Youth RE (0.5 units)

DREAM team meeting (1)  
ad hoc conversations, rounded down to zero units

Rites of Passage (0 units)

child dedications, marriages, memorial services  
two conversations, rounded down to zero units

PROGRESS ON GOALS (as set on October 12, 2021):

**Take a class in communication / conflict / ambiguity / attuned listening this church year.**

I was rejected by the Good Grief Network.

I'm also looking for other potential courses, and I welcome your suggestions!

**Offer at least one Book Group that explores the above skills and/or tools.**

I'm offering a covenant group which will read *Awe* by Dacher Keltner (and other books)

I welcome other suggestions for book group discussions or sermons.

**Preach at least three times about these skills/tools.**

This will be part of the service on 3/12.

The services on 11/20 and 12/4 touched on some of these topics.

**Explore incorporating skills/tools practice in the majority of the services I lead.**

I had several conversations about this while on Sabbatical  
I will incorporate some of the above conversations in services monthly from now on

**Co-lead (with Board and/or Committee on Ministry members) a “Fireside Chat” / Q&A session to demonstrate transparency and accountability, approximately quarterly.**

We will hold our next Town Hall on Sunday afternoon, April 2.

We held a Town Hall on Sunday afternoon, December 18.

#### PASTORAL CARE

We have over twenty thousand dollars in the Ministerial Discretionary Fund.

#### MEDITATION

During my sermon last Sunday (3/5/23), I posed three questions for the congregation: how fully will we commit to Zoom church, to families/children/youth, and to supporting each other as we co-create the humane, transformative congregation-of-the-future.

None of these is necessarily more important than the others. In fact, I think they are three slightly distinct aspects of the same main goal, which is to create the conditions and practices for human thriving. We always need respect, we always need compassion, we always need meaningful pursuits, we always need joy—and we need them all even more acutely, due to the isolation of the past few years.

Please do something for yourself today—something that you find healing or restorative, whatever these mean to you. Do it, not because it gives you more strength to serve others, but because you deserve it. Period.

Unrelated to the above, and exactly the same thing as the above, the next time you feel your heart swell a bit with sympathy or compassion, please reach out and act on that compassion.

So may we be,  
Chip

## APPENDIX - Work Product from Sabbatical of January 2023

I will use this month of Sabbatical for study, education, writing, meditation, and other forms of professional and religious growth.

I will explore how to incorporate best practices for communication and conflict engagement in the regular liturgy of services which I present (with an eye to sharing/teaching these practices to other ministers and congregations). Ideally, this will be both didactic and embodied (perhaps a set of rituals?) This exploration will include conversations with other clergy (from UU and other traditions), and consulting with professionals in related practices.

I spoke with several colleagues, and they were all quite excited about including communication and conflict engagement best practices as liturgical elements. Most contributed an idea, or at least asked a good question. Eventually I plan to present these ideas to a wider ministerial audience (probably Facebook) to develop them further. These conversations tended to focus on dialogues, litanies, antiphonal prayers, and multi-voiced readings, rather than didactic presentations. I intend to include one such element in a service each month, and gauge how they are received.

I will deepen my existing meditation practice, by resuming the second practice period each day. I have been meditating a second time (usually in the afternoon) five or more times each week.

I will pursue other forms of professional and religious growth by conversing with trusted colleagues. My goal is to have at least two in-person deep conversations, and extensive phone/Zoom calls with at least five other colleagues.

I had two in-person deep conversations, with the Rev. Mr. Bill Gupton and the Rev. Mr. Douglas Taylor. I had good phone/Zoom conversations with three other people. I feel much more grounded, thanks in part to these conversations.