

Minister's Report

Report to the Board of the First Unitarian Church of South Bend, Indiana
Rev. Chip Roush - 12 April 2023

INFORMATION

The panel on Transgender Rights (also known as the conversation against the “Slate of Hate”) when very well. Several members and friends of our congregation spoke, which felt really good to see and hear.

I will be preaching at our sibling congregation, the UU Fellowship of Elkhart, this Sunday.

We talked about our UUA recommending a new model for compensation guidelines. Here is the page that talks about the new model, and a video of a webinar they offered:

<https://www.uua.org/leaderlab/congregational-salary>

Dan Hotchkiss has some advice for congregations who are having trouble finding enough volunteers:

Reorganizing, Now That You're Smaller — Congregational Consulting Group

<https://www.congregationalconsulting.org/reorganizing-now-that-youre-smaller/>

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

In May, I will take a short study leave over Memorial Day weekend, Friday through Sunday, May 26-28.

PERPETUAL CALENDAR

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 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 - look for form link. No reminder notice sent; no online filing at this time. Deadline May 15

June

Newly elected Board members join standing Board for monthly meeting

Determine dates for monthly meetings

Quarterly update on Endowment disbursements

Get door codes for newly-elected Trustees

QUESTIONS FOR NEXT MONTH

ACTIVITIES

From Monday, February 26, through Sunday, March 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 10 units for study leave, that leaves a contractual minimum of 38+ units of work. Over that March time period, I recorded 41 units:

Sunday Services (14 units)

Planning & presenting worship services on Sunday (3)
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 (6 units)

Phone calls & texts (9)
Home, hospital, etc., visits (4)
Visits at church, restaurant, etc. (3)
Grief Circle (1)
Care Committee meeting (1)
weekly Thursday afternoon Zoom Gathering (4)

Associational Ties (4.5 units)

meet with Mentees (4)
Chicago Area Liberal Ministers (CALM) via zoom (1)
conversations with colleagues (4)
long conversation about issue at SUUSI (1)
Co-Moderator of UUMA Facebook page (approx. daily)

Spiritual Development of Congregation (4 units)

Ostara gathering, ritual (1)
Unraveling Whiteness class (4)
70th Anniversary Planning meeting (2)
conversations with congregant(s)

Adult RE (3 units)

Pathfinder role-playing game (1)
Covenant Group (1)
Chillin' with Crayons on zoom (2)
ad hoc conversations

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)

Membership (1.5 units)

Office Hours (6)
emails & call from members & friends

Marketing / Publicity (1 unit)

posting upcoming services on Facebook, Twitter, our website
conversation with Louise about marketing (1)
note: the 70th Anniversary planning could also go here,
but I've included it in Spiritual Development, above

Social Justice (0.5 units)

Peace & Social Justice committee meeting (1)
a few conversations

Public Religious Face of the Congregation (0 units)

theological conversations with folks who ask for gift cards (2)
emails from local students / organizations
all rounded down to zero units

Children & Youth RE (0 units)

ad hoc conversations, rounded down to zero units

Rites of Passage (0 units)

child dedications, marriages, memorial services
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

I welcome other suggestions for book group discussions or sermons.

Preach at least three times about these skills/tools.

This was 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 have held Town Hall meetings on Sunday afternoons, 12/18/22 and 4/2/23.

PASTORAL CARE

We have had many people inquire about help from the Ministerial Discretionary Fund.

When I am in for Office Hours, it is not uncommon for there to be three or four visitors each day.

MEDITATION

Budgeting is rarely pleasant—especially when it appears that we do not have enough resources to fund the things we want to do in the world. Our congregation is facing a deficit budget, and the fact that many other congregations are, too, is not much of a comfort.

What may be more comforting is the fact that our UUA has many resources to help us close the gap in our budget. They have online articles and webinars, and professional consultants who are available to help.

Among the possibilities are holding another stewardship campaign (this Spring or next Autumn), creating more fundraising opportunities, and/or trimming our budget. I will also risk the wrath of Elizabeth Scarborough's ghost, and note that some congregations have seen fit to use some of their Endowment funds to help with a temporary shortage. This appears to me more of a structural, systemic, issue, so I am NOT recommending that we use our Endowment monies at this time. Nevertheless, it is important to know all of our options.

In the also-not-recommended, worst-case scenario, the congregation could join together with other "local" congregations, to share resources, staff, programming, etc. Congregations are in the thick of their Search processes right now, so we won't know final results for a while yet. I know of at least three other congregations in Indiana which are looking for part-time ministers. I believe that at least two of them received *no* inquiries from potential clergy. It is much, much better for congregations to have full-time

clergy, and joining together to share might not be the worst situation, for congregations who find themselves in such a predicament.

So may we be,
Chip