

Report to the Board of the First Unitarian Church of South Bend, Indiana
Rev. Chip Roush - 09 August 2023

INFORMATION

General Assembly will be online-only for 2024. It will be multiplatform again in 2025, with the in-person aspect held in Baltimore, Maryland. There will be an in-person MidAmerica Regional Assembly in late spring of 2024. As far as I know, the dates have not been set for this.

SCHEDULE

In September, I'll take a short study leave over the Labor Day weekend: Friday through Sunday, September 1-3, 2023.

Correction: last month I stated that I would take a vacation from Wednesday, July 19, through Wednesday, August 2—that time was actually study leave. I apologize for any confusion.

I am not scheduled for any more vacation or study leave through August or September (other than that holiday weekend).

PERPETUAL CALENDAR

August

Inform Chairs and Congregation that committees are formed and chairs approved

Set dates for Service auction, annual meeting, concerts, other fundraisers and social events.

Endowment Committee sends Board quarterly report

Annual Board Retreat: set goals for the year; renew the Covenant between Board and Minister

September

Quarterly update on Endowment disbursements

October

review/edit Perpetual Calendar (added here 8/29/18, as nothing else was in October)

QUESTIONS FOR NEXT MONTH

none

ACTIVITIES

From Monday, June 26, through Sunday, July 30, 2023, there were five weeks; my contract calls for an average of at least twelve units per week, for a total of 60+ units (where a unit is defined as a morning, an afternoon, or an evening of work, in general).

Subtracting 24 units for study leave, and 2 units for the Independence Day holiday, that leaves a contractual minimum of 34+ units of work. Over that July time period, I recorded 37.5 units:

Sunday Services (12.5 units)

- Planning & presenting worship services on Sunday (2)
- 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
- Worship Arts Committee meeting (1)
- Sermon Sounding Board (weekly; 3)

Governance (5.5 units)

- Board meeting (1), communications & follow-up tasks from Board
- Committee on Ministry meeting (nobody from committee attends) (1)
- Conversations with concerned members (1)
- “Defeat the Deficit” Task Force meeting (1)
- Town Hall meeting (1)
- Building Use meeting (1)

Pastoral Care & Counseling (4.5 units)

- Phone calls, texts, Facebook messages (5)
- Home, hospital, etc., visits (0)
- Visits at church, restaurant, etc. (3)
- Care Committee meeting (1)
- Buy Meijer grocery cards (1)
- weekly Thursday afternoon Zoom Gathering (3)
- Grief Circle (1)

Associational Ties (3 units)

- meet with Mentees (2)
- conversations with colleagues (3)
- in-person meeting with Rev. Tom Bozeman of Hobart (1)
- Co-Moderator of UUMA Facebook page (approx. daily)
- UUMA Moderators meeting (1)

Communications (3 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

Membership (3 units)

- Office Hours (6)
- welcome conversation with new member (1)
- Jim Curlee’s birthday party (1)
- Ice Cream Social (1)
- emails & call from members & friends
- // Game Night could have gone here, too, but I put it Children’s RE

Staff Supervision (2 units)

- weekly meetings (4); ongoing training

Adult RE (1 units)

Awe Covenant Group & prep therefor (1)
ad hoc conversations

Marketing / Publicity (1 units)
meeting with Marketing chair (1)
posting upcoming services on Facebook, Twitter, our website

Children & Youth RE (1 unit)
Game Night (1)
ad hoc conversations

Social Justice (1 unit)
Peace & Social Justice committee meeting (1)
conversations with local justice leaders & activists

Spiritual Development of Congregation (rounded down to 0 units)
short conversations with congregant(s)

Public Religious Face of the Congregation (rounded down to 0 units)
theological conversations with folks who ask for gift cards (1)
emails from local students / organizations

Rites of Passage (0 units)
child dedications, marriages, memorial services

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

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

I did some work on these things with therapists and coaches, but did not attend a class.

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

I'm leading a covenant group discussing *Awe* by Dacher Keltner

Preach at least three times about these skills/tools.

The services on 11/20, 12/4, and 3/12 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 incorporated some of the above conversations in services.

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 to five visitors each day.

MEDITATION

I am tickled when folks bring me orders of service from the UU congregations they've visited while on vacation, so I thought I'd share a bit from the congregation in Colorado where I just took study leave.

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Boulder turned 75 on the second Sunday I preached, so they are similar in age to our congregation. They have about twice the number of members, and something like 2-3 times our operating budget, so our congregations aren't identical siblings. Still, there are many similarities, and one really compelling difference.

They, too, are teaching an OWL class this fall. They're also presenting multi-platform services, and they have a multiple-person team each Sunday to take care of all the sound and internet details. Each of the two Sundays I was there, there was some sort of snag which had to be fixed on the fly. Each time, the service went on and the changes were made smoothly. None of us are perfect, and many of us can face issues with grace and aplomb.

The really fascinating part of their service was their "Blessings and Concerns" ritual. People submitted written notes to be read by the worship leader, then folks had the opportunity to take a stone of blessing or a stone of concern, and place it in a wide tray of earth. I was moved by the story of the soil and stones: part of the mountains, cultivated by the indigenous peoples, cleansed by mountain snowfall, and gathered by loving members of the church. It really provided a sense of connection in both place and time.

We may not be among mighty mountains, but the story of humans in this fertile river plain is still compelling. We are still facing life's difficulties with compassion and courage.

So may we be,
Chip