

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

INFORMATION

Dr. Shuman has asked for a waiver, to rent the building for the memorial service honoring the life of his wife, Marcia, for a cost of \$1,000. He'd like the service to be Friday, April 12, at 2:00pm.

Pat Davis has requested that her pay rate be adjusted to the new rate of \$19/hour as of 1/1/24, whether or not she is training a new Office Manager at that point. Her last day will be January 21, 2024, unless she is training the new person (or has received that increase in pay rate).

With COVID-19 hospitalization rates again rising, we probably should revisit our policy. Please see the appendix for some background and my thoughts.

Our UUA's Annual Program Fund will ask us for \$9436 for FY25 (up from our Fair Share amount of \$8895 for FY24)

General Assembly will be online-only next year: June 20-23, 2024. It will be multiplatform again in 2025, with the in-person aspect held in Baltimore, Maryland (June 19-22, 2025).

Our MidAmerica Regional Assembly will take place April 19-21, 2024. At least some of the events (including a semi-famous Keynote Speaker?) will also include our friends from the Pacific West Region. As such, virtually all of the Assembly will be accessible online *and* there will be at least one in-person gathering in each Region. The in-person gathering for MAR is tentatively planned to occur in Madison, Wisconsin.

SCHEDULE

I will take six days of vacation, from Tuesday through Sunday, December 26-31. Monday January 1, 2024 is the New Year's holiday; I'll be in the office on Tuesday 1/2/24, and plan to preach on Sunday, 1/7/24.

In January, I will take a brief vacation, from Friday through Sunday, January 26-28, 2024.

PERPETUAL CALENDAR

December

Quarterly update on Endowment disbursements

Order 1099 Forms from the IRS through www.IRS.gov/orderforms

The online forms can't be used for Copy A which needs to go to the IRS. December 31

January

Board certifies membership for report to UUA.

Send IRS Form 1099-MISC to all non-corporate church payees who have received \$600.00 or more in the previous year and send Copy A of the form to the IRS.

Confirm filing and mailing of W-2 (Fed & employees), Fed W-3, Form WH-3 and Indiana Form

WH-1 by the Church's payroll processor. Get copies for the church files. deadline: January 31

February

Nominating Committee begins making contacts & preparing a slate of candidates for election

ACTIVITIES

From Monday, October 30, through Sunday, November 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 holiday, 6 units of vacation, and 4 units for study leave, that leaves a contractual minimum of 36+ units of work. Over that November time period, I recorded 37 units. These units were used on the following activities (please note that only the top number in each section is a number of units. All the rest are the number of times I did that thing/activity):

Sunday Services (16 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
- Worship Arts Committee meeting (1)
- Sermon Sounding Board (weekly; 3)

Governance (3.5 units)

- Board meeting (1), communications & follow-up tasks from Board
- Committee on Ministry meeting (1)
- Meet with new Treasurer (1)
- Create draft "want ad" for Office Manager position (1)

Membership (3 units)

- Office Hours (7)
- Attend New Member class (1)
- Contacts about maintaining membership (4)
- Cook an entrée for the Silent Supper (1)
- Emails & call from members & friends
- (Game Night could have gone here, but I chose Children's RE)

Associational Ties (3 units)

- Meet with Mentees, et al (3)
- Conversations with colleagues (8)
- MAR "Ministers of pastoral-sized congregations" Zoom meeting (1)
- Co-Moderator of UUMA Facebook page (approx. daily)
- Zoom meeting of the above Co-Moderators (1)

Pastoral Care & Counseling (2.5 units)

- Phone calls, texts, Facebook messages (2)
- Home, hospital, etc., visits (0)
- Visits at church, restaurant, etc. (2)
- Care Committee meeting (1)
- Buy Meijer grocery cards (1)

Weekly Thursday afternoon Zoom Gathering (3)

Communications (2 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

Children & Youth RE (1 unit)

Game Night (1)
Ad hoc conversations, rounded down to zero units

Public Religious Face of the Congregation (1 unit)

United Religious Communities Board meeting (1)
Theological conversations with folks who ask for gift cards
Emails from local students / organizations

Adult RE (1 unit)

“Awe” covenant group (1)
Ad hoc conversations

Social Justice (1 unit)

Attended “Summit on Local News” (1)
Conversations with local justice leaders & activists

Rites of Passage (rounded up to 1 unit)

Conversations around planning memorial for former member Marcia Shuman (2)
discuss potential child dedications, marriages, memorial services

Marketing / Publicity (rounded down to 0 units)

Posting upcoming services on Facebook, Twitter, our website

Spiritual Development of Congregation (rounded down to 0 units)

Short conversations with congregant(s)

PROGRESS ON GOALS (*draft*; as set on October 3, 2023):

Attend worship when I’m not preaching, at least four times this year

I attended on October 29, 2023, in person

I attended on October 1, 2023, via Zoom

I attended on August 20, 2023, in person

Collaborate with Board to hire and train new Office Manager, whether or not Pat Davis stays

I am on the subcommittee charged to do this work

Collaborate with Worship Arts Committee to rewrite Pulpit Host script.

This has been accomplished.

Engage with at least one video/article from the UUA's LeaderLab communications resources
I did this in October.

Help arrange and attend monthly "Meet the Minister" sessions (alternatively in-person and on Zoom)
I sat at the "Potluck with the Preacher" table during the potluck luncheon on December 3, 2023.

Include staff update in each Minister's Report
See below

Join a local Board, and share my engagement with the congregation
I now serve on the URC Board.

Learn and practice emotional regulation exercises, such as Positive Intelligence, etc., and report on progress therewith in the Monthly Minister's Report.

I've read two chapters of the *Positive Intelligence* book
I've tentatively joined a small group to explore this book with a trained leader

Maintain 3/10 boundaries (no more than three evening events per week, and no more than ten evening events per month, except in emergency)

From Monday 10/30 through Sunday 11/26, I attended 1-3-2-1 evening events, successfully observing this boundary.

Offer at least one Adult RE course, of at least three sessions
The Adult RE Committee and I will discuss this sometime soon.

Remain and chat through an entire Coffee Hour (or until 1:00pm, whichever comes first), monthly (possibly to include engaging people still at Coffee Hour after I leave a meeting)

I was at church through Coffee Hour / potluck, after 1:00pm, on 10/8, 10/22, 11/5, and 12/3.

Visit and/or contact one or more "homebound" member per month.
I have reached out to one "homebound" member so far in December.

STAFF REPORT

See Pat's request, above.

Ian and I are planning the music for Christmas Eve. All suggestions (and volunteers!) are welcome.

MEDITATION

It seems like a good time to revisit the message of Advent. Even in these difficult days, even as the shadow seems to fall more and more heavily upon us, know that as we persevere, the light will return.

As Camus puts it, "In the midst of winter, I finally discovered within me an invincible summer."

So may we be,
Chip

APPENDIX – COVID-19 POLICY IN 2023-'24?

We have not had an in-person Christmas Eve service since the pandemic began.

Seven UU congregations collaborated to create Christmas Eve 2020, with several taped sections (including a simulated, but still surprisingly moving, Candlelight ritual) and a few sections live from various church buildings (as I did the chalice lighting from our sanctuary).

In 2021, after vaccines and summer gave us a reprieve, the virus returned with the autumn, and got even worse in December. Disheartened, we moved the service online; I led a sparsely-attended service from my home.

Last year, we had a robust service planned, but again the virus resurged. Just two days prior to our Christmas Eve service, the CDC reported St. Joseph County at “orange” levels. Ian Bunker, Byrd Tetzlaff and I presented the service while socially distanced in the Sanctuary.

How shall we plan for this Christmas Eve, and through this winter?

The CDC guidelines have been relaxed, now that many have been vaccinated and/or had at least one bout of the COVID-19 virus. They no longer recommend masking indoors for people who are not immunocompromised, or who live with or interact regularly with folks who are immunocompromised.

I would prefer that we all mask, so that everyone would feel safe and welcome in attending. That is not a realistic goal, I fear. I will likely wear a mask, when I'm not preaching. Others will, as well, and many will not. Many feel comfortable eating and drinking in a crowd, even as the hospitalization rates begin to climb again.

I do not envy you your task, and I welcome any conversation, privately or publicly, about a path forward. Clarity is necessary, in our policy and our source(s) of data. Not just for Christmas Eve, but for the planned pancake breakfast on 12/31, and for all of our activities through the winter.