

**Unitarian Church of Hinsdale**  
**October 2023 Board Report**  
**Rev. Dr. Beth Johnson**

Dear Board,

The Transition Ministry Training was powerful and generative. The days were very full - 10-12 hours with breaks of course, during which time I reviewed admin applications and worked on the upcoming service. The training was a combination of didactic sessions, small group and large group work. The training also included visits to the Rosa Parks Museum, the Legacy Museum and Monument and the Southern Poverty Law Center/Civil Rights Museum. Walking through Montgomery and visiting the historic sites of the civil rights movement was powerful. All of this was tied into how change happened/s, what is left to do, and how congregations can engage in this work. Our readings for this training include the UUA Common Read, *On Repentance and Repair: Making Amends in an Unapologetic World* by Danya Ruttenberg. I highly recommend this book. I think it is an important book for our congregations' leadership and parishioners, as well as applicable to personal and communal lives. In fact, I would like to invite y'all, board, to read it and let's discuss. I have every expectation that the ongoing transition ministry training will continue to be fruitful.

I have reviewed the board retreat notes and will begin work on my areas later this month. Focusing on the 10/15 program with the Vivekananda Vedanta Society and office admin screening applications and interviews.

## **Worship**

- **Services**

- Service topics are largely planned through December.
- Music Team met and we are still in the process of planning music for the coming season
- October 15th Anniversary service and afternoon event:
  - Planning is underway
    - Pam Fodor is handling hospitality
    - We have a beautiful flier to share
    - Publicized to local colleagues
    - Choir will sing
- I would like to manage expectations around the board retreat brainstorming notes regarding worship. I understand, appreciate, and share the desire to create innovative worship. I love innovative worship! [It is what has marked my ministry.](#) I would suggest that instead of

“donating” our worship format that there first be reflection on the purpose of worship and liturgy with an understanding that certain elements provide the scaffolding/container for innovation. Of course there is always room for a radical departure (see my website). The types of services I have done at UCH thus far that are not the “usual” format: A labyrinth walk, a service where people wrote their aspirations for the church and “wove” them on ribbons, services in a circle format, blessing of the hands, change in joys and sorrows, use of video, collaborative services bringing in multiple voices and perspectives. I am considering some adjustments to our liturgy as well. That is all to say, “mending” is a more appropriate category for this idea.

○

## **Administration**

- Job Description for the Office Administrator has been listed on the UUA jobs board, sent to area UU colleagues, and posted on Indeed. I chose a plan on Indeed that allowed me to receive 17 applications, which we have. \$163 charge. I am filtering them out, and have completed one and have two more initial interviews scheduled for this week. And one for next week, with other invitations out.
  - Pam and I are working on an operations manual for this position.
- Regular meetings with our bookkeeper, Saenvih, Pam and music staff, Julia and Jamie.
- LEAD Team - The LEAD Team had an exciting and creative meeting with the Circle Coordinators. Pam created a fun activity to generate ideas and enthusiasm. The Circle Coordinators are starting meetings with their teams. I missed a debrief, but look forward to connecting with them again soon.

## **Pastoral Care**

- Ongoing
- **Circles**
  - **Social Justice**
    - Green Sanctuary -
      - I am in the Faith In Place 2023 Green Summit this week.
    - Racial Equity Team - Book study “See No Stranger” in person 10/22
    - Welcoming Congregation - will be following up on our book read and continuing our work toward the Welcoming Congregation renewal

- I met with area UU ministers and other faith leaders last month to learn how to support our trans siblings. Will be having a follow up meeting Wednesday 10/11 at 5pm
- **Stewardship**
  - Continue attending the weekly auction meetings as possible
- **Home & Garden**
  - Thom, Pam and I postponed meeting to discuss our cleaning needs, but will meet soon.

### **Denominational affairs**

- Article II draft passed for a year of study. Will develop a plan to bring this to the congregation - still in process.
- Plan for more denominational involvement - still in process
  - I am considering a regular column or email featuring denominational news; Side with Love, reports from President Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt, Central Midwest Regional news, etc. (see this week's blog)
- **Professional Development**
  - Community Safety for Congregations Training: provided by SURJ (Showing Up for Racial Justice) Session II in October
  - Collective Trauma Summit - 9/26-10/4 online, viewed several sessions
  - Embodied Leadership - Strozzi Institute Community Dojo training 1 hour 10/10/23

### **UUMA**

- Attend the CALM meetings
- Central Midwest UU Ministers Retreat October 17 - 19. I will attend part of it online. 10/17 and 10/19.
- Monthly meetings with my mentee

### **2023-2024 Leave Time**

- July 1 -11, 2023      Vacation
- October 2-6, 2023    Study leave - Transitional Ministry Training

~~~~~

## **Ongoing - placeholder**

### **○ Communications Circle - Recommendation**

- Recommend reinstating a Communications Circle. Pam and I have been discussing this, and I had a brief conversation with Bob DW. We can engage the congregation to determine where and how they get information, how else would they like to. Look at our systems and needs. Explore our social media presence and communication tools with a new admin.

## **\*\*For consideration as Priorities Allow:**

- Database - I have been recommending a new database, Breeze. In the past month, I've been looking at other databases recommended by colleagues: Breeze is still high on the list, Realm - not as high, Planning Center is getting the best reviews. I recommend we have a small team take a look at our needs and what is available and make a decision as priorities allow.
- Phone system - At this time there is no way to check for messages remotely. Although there are very few calls, it is important to pick up any that might come in. The phone system shuts off fairly regularly and must be restarted from a device on the lower level,
- Computer - at some point look at an upgrade