

UUFCO June 2017 Board Report - Minister

By Rev. Antonia Won, June 7, 2017

Programs and Ministries

May was a peaceful month with normal programs winding down towards the summer season and preparations for the farewell festivities marking the end of my ministry. Then this past week, we received a shock with the news of the deaths of Judy and David Paulsmeyer. A candlelighting midday midweek was attended by 80+ people, many of whom were not from UUFCO and who stayed and shared memories for nearly 90 minutes. It was a much-needed gathering and helped the whole community digest the loss. Planning for the Celebration of Life is in full gear as the event is expected to bring many people in. As we navigate the planning of this, all involved have made efforts to clarify and respect roles, to extend trust and the sense of teamwork to include the Minister, and to respect my requests to streamline communication. It is a healing time, in many ways.

To inform you of other developments, Kathleen Harrington is now the chair of the Adult Religious Exploration committee, and the Leadership Development Committee will be holding sessions each of the next three months to train the congregation on our database, Breeze. The LDC also held a gathering for new members for the second year. It's a really effective way to connect new people with the Board and LDC and I hope it becomes an 'annual' event.

The new UUFCO website ll live July 1, thanks to Dale Clark. It's a more accessible platform, easier for lay leaders and others to update materials and information and taking pressure off of Staff.

Ten well-known leaders have continued to participate in the Neighbor Love project I've been involved with, an inter-congregational group of about 70 people. Our UUFCO group has jsut committed to formalizing themselves as part of Social Justice, continuing UUFCO's engagement in immigrant justice issues and supporting the Latinx community.

To look back only little more than two and half years, it is quite stunning to see how much has taken place and how far UUFCO has come in seeing itself as a full-fledged member of Bend's Anglo-faith community, as a prophetic UU congregation of standing and significance, aware of and active in the denomination; and proficient at communicating, trusting, and collaborating in this larger covenantal incarnation.

Leadership Development

Your incoming president, Max Merrill, has been proactively asking questions about how best to support the upcoming transition of ministry. My hope is that time between now and Rev. Scott's arrival is spent in talking about

- 1) What this congregation has come through in these years of change: what has happened, what has been done and what has been learned. Important lessons need to be remembered. Times of transition can cause regression to old patterns of behavior and communication. Good process and a priority on right relationship are worth talking about as a new Board, before the new minister arrives.
- 2) What opportunities and challenges lie in the congregation's character and demographic, and how might these play out in a visioning process. My experience is that many leaders here are goal and results oriented. This is truly wonderful in many situations and a liability in others; especially as many are accustomed to knowing what's best and most important. But faith community is a different context than much of our lives, and Bend and Central Oregon have needs that may be inconvenient or not particularly visible or rewarding to attend to.

The more you become articulate and self-aware on these kinds of questions, the more effective Rev. Scott's transition will be. Remember, this transition will take two to three years. These partnerships are

complex and covenantal and take time to flourish. Remember the mantra, 'Mindful process leads to meaningful progress.'

And to repeat a statement from May's report as you transition to a new Board, I hope you will commit to an agenda and mission as a Board of further fighting and dismantling our norms, habits and assumptions of privilege that exist in each and all of us. This is perhaps our most important faith work today.

Staff

Jenn Egan, administrator, is extremely busy with rentals currently, impacting her duties for the congregation, and affecting other staff as they answer the phone calls. It's my hope something can be done with our existing telecoms to alleviate the problem. As last year, there will be no July newsletter and hopefully the summer will bring some decrease on the demands of the office.

All in all, I leave you with a staff many ministers would be jealous of, and a long way from where we were when I came on board. I'm grateful that my recommendations for staffing were respected and acted upon by previous boards.

Thank you all for your partnership and clarity this year, and my greatest thanks to Mark Hickman for his support, faith, leadership and willing spirit. Thank you, Mark.

I will remember my ministry with UUFCO and my time with all of you with much love and pride and gratitude.

Reverently yours,

Rev. Antonia Won