

**MINISTER'S REPORT TO THE
UUTC BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

December 22, 2015

Stewardship

At the Finance Committee monthly meeting, we agreed the highest priority at UUTC right now is a highly skilled, organized, and motivated Stewardship Team. Jim Null and I have volunteered to serve on this committee.

At present, existing policies and procedures do not yet clearly spell out the Who, What, When, Where, Why or How to initiate and manage an ongoing, successful Stewardship program. I believe leadership must answer these questions quickly in order to ensure a successful, mission-driven budget. I also believe the "WHY" will become much clearer after the January Visioning Retreat.

Also, I am a bit concerned about the overall reluctance of members and friends to volunteer to serve in key leadership roles such as the Stewardship and Social Teams. As leaders of this congregation, we may need to dedicate some time to assessing the interest and energy levels of existing members and friends; the possible need for more staff to "fill the voids" in key vacant positions; the possible need to develop an active PR campaign to recruit and maintain new members and friends; and formal training for rising leaders to help them develop the skills and confidence to work effectively as Lay Leaders.

Personnel

We have extended a verbal offer to Kevin Smith to serve as the Sunday morning A/V Technician to take over those duties from Mark Allison when he retires on December 31. (This is contingent upon Kevin passing required background checks. Given that he is currently employed as the Full Time Communications Officer for the Transylvania Schools, I have every reason to believe that this will simply be a pro forma requirement.) Mark and Kevin are working together to develop a training schedule to ensure that Kevin is up to speed before Mark retires. RK will continue to serve as the A/V Tech one Sunday a month, so that Kevin has at least one weekend free each month. Kevin will also work with the Tech Team to ensure that we have volunteer and possibly PT paid staff to operate the A/V equipment for various functions throughout the week that require technical expertise.

Katie Messmer is now our official Nursery Staff Member. After the holidays, we will once again begin to recruit other adults and youth to staff the nursery, since these positions typically have high levels of turn-over throughout the country.

GMAC/Transition Team/Communication

The Governance and Ministry Advisory Committee met for the first time on Friday, December 18. The committee discussed key responsibilities: 1) soliciting and listening to feedback about the ministry of the congregation, and serving to mediate conflicts if necessary; 2) Helping to discern and articulate UUTC's mission, vision, and values; 3) working with staff, board and other lay leaders to publicize and communicate the various tasks of the transition, and to develop a plan of action for the remainder of

the Interim Ministry. We discussed beginning with the end in mind, i.e.: “working backwards” from the date of calling a settled minister, and developed a work plan to ensure that all key tasks are accomplished.

Building Use Task Force

The Task Force continues to meet to study use of space and begin to prioritize the order in which certain projects will be initiated. Of course, all plans of action involving expenditures and significant modification of building use will be presented to the board.

Worship

I am delighted to report that we had very good attendance and received favorable feedback about the success of the first (annual?) Christmas Pageant at UUTC. Given the number of families with children who participated and/or were in attendance, this suggests that our efforts to engage and retain members of this demographic are having desired results. Hopefully, we can continue to provide programming to keep these prospects and new members and friends engaged – and increasing their involvement and support of UUTC.

We continue to use and refine the new spreadsheet to coordinate all the different aspects of Sunday Morning Services. This document is already making it easier for RK to develop the Order of Service, and should enhance the quality of worship services.

Program

About 27 children and youth attended Santa’s Workshop. Kudos to staff members Heather and Emily and a cadre of generous elven volunteers for making this event such a success!!

The morning meditation program is slowly growing.

Our Small Group Ministries continue to have strong attendance in ongoing gatherings. It would be helpful to identify a person who is willing to chair and champion this program in the future.

Game Night continues to be a popular draw, and Wonderful Wednesdays on December 16, preceding the pageant, was a smash hit. I do have a concern that although some of the people in attendance are extremely generous in contributing to cover the cost of food at these events, free will offerings do not always cover the costs of these events. I wonder if this is due to lack of publicity about the real costs of these events, or the purpose of the events. This topic may warrant some additional conversation.

Outreach

I continue the tradition of ***monthly chapel at College Walk***, and attended the ***TRAIN meeting of T.C. to coordinate social services*** among the various agencies that serve the county. I hope that as a result of the Visioning Retreat in January, we may be able to FOCUS OUR EFFORTS on one or a few key issues in the local community and wider world. The benefit of focus is that UUTC can become known in the

community for supporting one (or a few) causes whole-heartedly, and that the congregation can receive free PR from local media outlets, based on the our successes in a few targeted areas.

Actions Requested of the Board

Continue to address change management, especially as it relates to payment of pledges and support of formation of a Stewardship Team, and listening to and responding to concerns of members. Convening the GMAC/Transition Team should help facilitate these processes.

As noted above, continue to develop and refine policies that clearly spell out the Who, What, When, Where, Why or How for an ongoing Stewardship program. I believe leadership must answer these questions quickly in order to ensure a successful, mission-driven budget. I also believe the “WHY” will become much clearer after the January Visioning Retreat.

Also noted above, we may need to dedicate some time to assessing the interest and energy levels of existing members and friends; the possible need for more staff to “fill the voids” in key vacant positions; the possible need to develop an active PR campaign to recruit and maintain new members and friends; and formal training for rising leaders to help them develop the skills and confidence to work effectively as Lay Leaders.

Name and charge the members of the Search Committee for a Settled Minister. The work of this committee begins, in earnest, in January of 2016, and it is advisable to introduce the team to the congregation in December. I believe you will have named the team by the end of the evening.

Continue to promote full congregational involvement at the January Visioning Retreat – which I believe was just moved to January 30, as well as the January 6 Finance Forum.

Continue to encourage key leaders to read and internalize the book Not Your Parents’ Collection Plate by Clif Christopher. Based on my conversations with those who have read the book, I have the sense that our key leaders and supporters are beginning to understand the need to articulate a vision, in order to explain to potential donors how their contributions will change lives. This, to me, is perhaps the most exciting part of the transition work in Interim Ministry.

In summary, this is a great congregation with many strengths, gifts, and graces. I am grateful for the support of the officers and members at large for the many courageous steps you have taken to prepare for the Search Process. The congregation is blessed to have you serving in this capacity.

Respectfully submitted,



Rev. Dr. Paula R. Gable
Interim Minister