

# Minister's Report to the UUTC Board

## Focusing on Goals and Objectives

### June 2023

#### **Areas of Focus**

##### Pulpit & Worship

**Provide a meaningful worship experience for a wide variety of congregants.**

Since my last Board meeting I have helped lead two Sunday services at UUTC, plus there were two with a guest speaker. Themes included social justice (where I was leading elements of the service with our guest preacher from the NC Social Justice Ministries), Delight (the monthly Soul Matters Packet theme), and Father's Day. It was also meaningful to include the Bridging Ceremony for graduating teen, Olivia Tiner.

##### Community Building:

**Facilitate and expand the connections which already exist between the UUTC congregants and the larger community.**

I participate regularly in the Tuesday "Fellowship in the Hall" brown bag lunches at UUTC. One week in May one of the homeless people we know showed up with a meal from Bread of Life.

I led one of the Thursday Men's Group (in-person) sessions, in the wake of Dave Roberts' death.

Many of my usual connections were not able to happen due to being out sick for a week and a half.

##### Social Justice

**Challenge the congregation to address social justice issues directly.**

I encouraged folks who arrived early for the Installation to spend time filling out postcards to our political representatives in support of public education budgets in NC.

Having the Asheville Gay Men's Chorus here for a Pride Event, and inviting LGBTQ folks and allies to attend for free, was a social justice offering by UUTC in a county that has no Pride recognition.

I advocated for our presence at Hendersonville Pride, and with help of Alice Wellborn we coordinated to be side by side with the UUs of Hendersonville, and involved several UUTC folks (from elementary school up through elders) as table volunteers on June 10.

I have met with the Social Action team twice. Once at a member's request to chat about how we can do more, and another regularly scheduled meeting of the group (this time held at The Haven). Both these meetings were to help move forward in engaging the congregation more widely.

## **Target Goals**

**Pulpit & Worship: Draw from other religious traditions in worship services at least twice a month.**

I have included Christian, Middle Eastern, Eastern Religions, and Jewish references in the services.

**Community Building: The minister will reach out to a variety of congregants to learn about the connections they have already built in the larger community.**

Continuing this process. Next step has been discussed with Social Action Team about doing a broad survey with the congregation.

**Social Justice: Explore the difference between social justice and social service in sermons and activities.**

I preached on this topic on April 16. My Independence Day sermon on July 2 will also touch on the ways religious structures in America undergirded the revolution, and the ways our ideas of protection of people (justice) shifted.

## **SPECIAL CEREMONIES:**

Kevin Lausch led (and I participated) in the Bridging Ceremony, co-created with member Tara McDonald for her daughter, Olivia Tiner, on June 11.

I officiated at the graveside service (June 16) and Memorial Service (June 17) for member Dr. James Henry Sanders, Jr. (Dec. 30, 1927 - June 9, 2023). This resulted in overflow seating in the social hall and lobby.

I officiated at the Memorial Service (June 18) for member David Reade Roberts (June 4, 1956 - June 3, 2023), with online distant coordination with his out-of-state family members.

Note to any who can think ahead and give a gift to family: Any notes we have on file about your favorite hymn, music, or other hints for a service are a relief to family members. Have you talked with your loved ones about your arrangements?

## **OTHER ITEMS OF NOTE:**

A BIG THANK YOU to all who make it possible to pull off the Vision weekend! We had 26 people in the Vision Statement workshop (thank you Michael Solomon and helpers), enjoyed lunch provided by Ann and Vicki, beautiful choir music in the service (thanks John, Carlene and Choir), a wonderful message from Lisa Garcia Sampson, on Sunday morning, and an energetic concert by the Asheville Gay Men's Chorus. Thanks for personally engaging and being at UUTC for portions of the June 4 events! (And yes, thank you for the tiara)

In the past week I rushed from one event to another, especially with the addition of graveside and memorial services, and missed out on at least one of the congregation's concerts as a result. It is a part of ministry. Then I drove ten hours (including stretch breaks and picnic lunch) to the UUA General Assembly. I "slept in" the first morning here in Pittsburgh, and again the next morning, but I am also deeply engaged in the learning and shared wisdom. One resource, hopefully not needed but important for Board leaders to view, is about how to be prepared for right-wing disruptions to worship or church events:

<https://sidewithlove.org/ourstories/2023/6/1/recording-preparing-for-pride-a-webinar-for-religious-professionals>

RK Young sent a link to staff at the beginning of the month, and I want you to see it too. The links to further resources are important. We don't have Dave Roberts on safety team anymore, we all need to step up to fill that gap.

Homeless update: Without violating confidentiality, I do want to report that the two people sleeping here at UUTC have been informed by me that they need to find a safe place, elsewhere, to sleep. I also tried to get both re-engaged with non-profit and social service resources (in one case this worked). I remain open to pastoral visits, and the invitation to attend Sunday mornings is still there for these folks.