

Minister's Report to the UUTC Board

Focusing on Goals and Objectives

February 2023

Areas of Focus

Pulpit & Worship

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

Since my last Board Report I have led four Sunday services at UUTC. The services had readings and quotes from a variety of genders, races (including a central-sermon-theme quote from James Baldwin), and faith traditions (including a Buddhist hymn, a relation of the Christian of 1 John 4 to our Universalist understanding of divine love, a reading that was a re-visioned Psalm 23 from the Hebrew Bible), and spoke to the Soul Matters monthly themes of "Finding Our Center" and "The Path of Love" - including love songs by me and my Barbershop Harmony buddies.

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.

I led the College Walk UU discussion circle on February 22.

I led several of the Thursday Men's Group (in-person) sessions.

I attended the Chamber of Commerce "Lunch and Learn" on Equity and Inclusion, and Disability Employment.

Leadership Development:

I attended (with other UUTC leaders) the online UU Leadership Experience on February 8, 2023.

Social Justice

Challenge the congregation to address social justice issues directly.

I have been promoting the UUA Common Read book "Mistakes and Miracles: Congregations on the Road to Multiculturalism" by Nancy Palmer Jones and Karin Lin. It is a challenge to get folks interested in even reading about this subject, and I believe there is a danger in skipping this step before engaging in united social action. Very few UUTC folks have indicated they have obtained the book, and our organizational meeting led us to postpone the launch of discussion sessions into March.

Note that I have signed a group letter from faith leaders to Gov. Cooper to commute the sentences of the 137 people on North Carolina's death row (5th largest death row in the US) and will alert members when lay-person support is called upon by the NCCADP action group.

Target Goals

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

I included Christian, Jewish and Buddhist references in the services I led. There were also secular readings and humanist themes appearing in the texts, hymns and messages.

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.**

Beginning this process. Social Action did not meet in February, I will be surveying them in the March meeting night.

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

For future Sunday. Did not fit the sermon themes this month, and would be better addressed as the UUA Common Read book discussions start (March-June) and the Soul Matters theme turns to "Resistance" (April).

OTHER ITEMS OF NOTE:

I officiated at the **Memorial Service for Linda McClain Austin** (member) at UUTC on Saturday, February 4, 2023. The church was packed that day, with about six seats left empty in the sanctuary not reserved for family, and substantial numbers of folks on the folding chairs to watch via TV in the Social Hall and Lobby. Others watched online.

While I often appear at UUTC on Guest Speaker Sundays, that won't be possible in the coming weeks. The next two weekends I will travel with Christy to PA as our house sale is proceeding and we're packing final car-loads of belongings. I have been helping behind the scenes so that things are ready for our guest speaker on March 5.

There will be a new member reception at our home on the afternoon of March 19. New member recognition will be in the service that Sunday morning.