

REPORT TO THE UUC ANNUAL MEETING

June 4, 2017

Rev. Don Rollins

OVERVIEW: UUC is an overall healthy, hospitable and joyous congregation. The debt-to-income ratio and giving are within the norm for a midsize 1 congregation; membership is slightly up and; while there have been several “flashpoint” issues/situations addressed throughout the past 10 months, UUC’s current level of conflict does not seriously hamper its broader ministry.

The staff are dedicated professionals, able to work independently and as a team.

Likewise, most lay leaders (the 2016-17 board in particular) understand that church in general, and UUism in particular, are in major flux and need rethinking: there is growing awareness that changes in governance, policies and procedures, and the roles of boards and ministers are overdue.

The building and grounds are great assets to UUC’s identity and ministry, as are its music, lay pastoral care and mental health programs.

There is a clear sense of urgency to focus the congregation’s work in the area of social justice, and broad interest in how to accomplish that goal.

FEEDBACK: What follows is a breakdown of each of the ministries at UUC according to including a list of strengths and growing edges.

Finance/Stewardship/Endowment:

Strengths:

1. Strong stewardship campaign completed
2. Excellent leadership and team
3. Endowment now in place
4. Mortgage and member loans are manageable

Edges:

1. Research year-round giving programs
2. Advertise, educate and invite gifts to the endowment fund

Lifespan Faith Development/Leadership:

Strengths

1. Excellent programming for ages preschool-high school
2. Strong leadership from LFD director
3. Funding for maintenance-level programs/work hours

Edges

1. Increased hours for LFD director
2. Development of comprehensive adult program
3. Anticipate space needs for growing LFD programming

Lay Pastoral Care/Mental Health Justice Ministry:

Strengths

1. Highly effective leadership and pastoral associates
2. Necessary resource in solo-ministry, midsize congregation

Edges

1. Need to replace key leaders
2. Work with incoming settled minister to define working relationship

Worship

Strengths

1. Engaged and talented worship team
2. Culture of flexibility and creativity
3. Gifted and committed worship associates
4. Supportive of minister's initiatives for positive change

Edges

1. Solidify leadership for 2017-18
2. Clarify philosophy of worship with incoming settled minister
3. Explore projection for sanctuary with incoming settled minister

Social Justice:

Strengths

1. Strong interest in focusing on a primary issue
2. Model available to harness energy on an annual basis
3. Strong history of using half-plate giving to support values and connections
4. Existence of small-scale, service-based activities
5. Leaders in place for a Social Justice Team (SJT) to implement action plan

Edges

1. Members present at this Annual Meeting vote on primary issue for 2017-18
2. SJT works with interim minister through 7/31 to coordinate process
3. Congregation is offered many "entry points" for service/advocacy
4. SJT sets benchmarks and continuously solicits new action steps

Administration/Governance/Leadership Development:

Strengths

1. Strong boards for 2016-17 and 2017-18
2. Vision Statement completed and ready for vote at this meeting
3. Growing understanding of policy-driven boards, staff and congregations
4. Single council model in place
5. Wealth of good leaders in place
6. Excellent administrator

Edges

1. Begin plan to replace office administrator in advance of 2019 retirement
2. Board/standing committees continue to learn and implement policy governance
3. Build on leadership development training "pilot" program
4. Leaders expand understanding/application of policy-based leadership
5. Revisit congregation covenant for behavior
6. Reconstitute team to process internal conflicts
7. Consult incoming settled minister to explore deep conversation about growth

Membership/Connections:

Strengths

1. Strong team and leadership
2. Excellent membership orientation sessions
3. Team has culture of trying new ideas and best practices
4. Team actively welcomes and connects newcomers

Edges

1. Nurture additional team leaders from within
2. Work with incoming settled minister regarding membership process

WRAPPING UP:

As many of you know, one-year interim ministries are becoming rare in our congregations. Evidence and experience tells us that a longer period of time generally results in stronger and longer settled ministries.

But I believe our year together has been an anomaly - due in large part to the goodness at the heart of your congregation. This is not say everything we aimed to do is done, nor did I get everything right along the way. It's been a very human process, and you've been my teacher along the way.

Still, I've believe we've accomplished the foremost goal of the interim experience, be it for one year or many: to leave a stronger congregation than the one we found. Stronger programs, stronger community, stronger governance and stronger roles for lay and and ordained leaders - none of which happens without your good heart and trust.

So, as Mary and I finish packing me up, I realize there are way too many people to thank for what has been a great year for me. Going forth, I'll sing your praises and watch from a distance as you and Pam journey together for many good years.

But I do want to lift up Carol Kern and the solid UUC board that has served as my sounding board, collaborator and fellow risk-takers in the spirit of a stronger congregation. You've made going to our monthly meetings something to look forward to, not dread.

Same with Lisa, Karen, Jared and Ella. You are one and all excellent people and professionals, and serving with you has raised the bar on what it means to be part of a good staff.

Lastly, take care of Pam. Let her practice her craft, and trust her to know what she's doing even when it crimps your style. Speak well of her. Praise her often. Show her your kindness. Remember that if you want a long ministry, you have to be a worthy partner.

Be well, all. And thanks again for a swell time.