

Report to the Board of Trustees, Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise, AZ
Rev. Samuel Schaal, Transition Minister
Sept. 5, 2021

Transitional Matters

- On the agenda in this month's meeting, I'm asking the Board to:
 - Name members of a Transition Team that will help me understand the congregation's culture and circumstances and we move through the transition. They will help when we do the History Wall (likely in January) and any other transition-focused experiences.
 - Approve what will become the congregation's standard menu of employee benefits and time off that I and Sherry have gathered, needed in the upcoming staff searches. Following this approval, we'll look for a few folks to draft policy around these items to establish a Personnel Handbook to keep updated as a source for human resources policy in the church.
- I've completed introductory conversations with each Board member and will continue with the chairs/leads of every committee, team, etc., in the church. I'm exploring each person's experience and vision regarding the church to get an overall sense of the ecology of the church system.

Staffing

- I accepted the resignation letter of Church Administrator Kathryn Pabich, effective Oct. 31. She will take at least the last week of October as vacation, and perhaps more which we're still working on. Thanks to Kathryn for her 20 years of service. I look forward to being involved in the hiring of the congregation's next Congregational Administrator.
- The Music Director search committee met Sept. 3. Continued thanks to Maggie Mahan for providing music leadership in the transition.
- Having found no extant personnel files, I created the beginnings of a file for each staff member to contain necessary core documents in a locked filing cabinet in the minister's office.
- I'm meeting weekly with Director of Family Ministry Lisa Lawrence. She now has a desk in the Multipurpose (nee Music) Room for a better sense of place. I look forward to her presence in worship regularly with the Story for All Ages starting Sept. 12.
- As we are starting a budget cycle for FY 2022, I will work with my direct reports (Director of Family Ministries, Director of Music and Church Administrator) in submitting first draft of program and administrative budgets to the Treasurer. This eases the budgeting process for the Treasurer a bit and helps me manage better, linking funding (which is resourcing the position for success) and supervising. I'll begin doing the same in other program areas where the minister is held accountable and begin to suggest likewise.

Worship

- Given the resurgence of infections with the Delta Variant, Sherry, Brooke and I decided to temporarily suspend food and beverages during social hour following worship. We'll continue to monitor the situation to keep the church as safe as possible. This is a disappointment, but we need to evolve as needed to meet the health challenges of these days. I now wear a mask in the office whenever there is another person in the room with me and have asked staff to do the same.
- Ingathering Sunday is Sept. 12. The September theme is *Embracing Possibility*, a good theme for the transition time at the beginning of the program year.
- Lisa and I are in discussion of how to use children and youth in worship in various roles to encourage their formation in the worship arts as well as model intergenerational community.
- Lisa and I decided to hold a Christmas Eve service on Dec. 24 with some children/youth participation, but modest so families can decide to be in worship or at home. I've alerted Maggie for the Music

Committee to see that we have good music support. Christmas Eve is a great time to invite guests and friends to church. If you have visiting family, please consider asking them to come along to service.

Finances and Generosity

- As announced, the stewardship campaign premieres in worship Sunday Dec. 5. I've proposed to the Stewardship Committee that we institute a Pacesetters Reception on Saturday Dec. 4 in the afternoon at a site off campus to honor those who pledge and give in the upper tiers (somewhere around the top 25% of gifts). The Board and program staff and spouses/partners will be invited as well to help thank the donors. This is to: 1. Thank them for their generosity, 2. Remind them that not everyone is able to give at their level, so these gifts are important to the mission of the church, 3. Elevate how the church changes lives and helps heal the world, so invite them to consider their level of giving and increase if possible. I will work out details with the Stewardship Committee.

Staff Reports

Lisa Lawrence, Director of Family Ministry

- Moving, organizing and cleaning storage, classrooms, office area and supplies
- Reviewed Soul Matters curriculum for preschool and elementary grades
- Advertising and preparing for RE Ingathering/Welcome Back Breakfast
- Creating new program literature
- Hired preschool staff
- Training and scheduling preschool staff
- Recruiting volunteer teachers and assistants
- Scheduling Zoom meetings for class times
- Reviewing new curriculum with teachers
- Developing "Sunday Morning Shadows" program for 7th and up youth and organizing with church team leaders
- Developing and advertising new youth group for 7th and up with youth group volunteer
- Beginning to plan this year's Trunk or Treat event

General

- Thanks to Sherry Robinson, Steve Shanklin, David King and Janet King (and likely a few others here and there) who've been moving furniture in the office. I have a desk from the reception area, a wall of bookcases and a beautiful midcentury-modern cabinet repurposed from the greeter station gracing the minister's office. The minister's two metal desks are now in the Multipurpose Room for Lisa and our future Music Director, and we've done various other moves to have the office show off a fresh face.
- I will be going home to Dallas Sept. 20-28, returning to the office Sept. 29. (Charged as one week of vacation and Labor Day holiday deferred since Monday is also my day off.)

It remains an honor and pleasure to serve the congregation.

In our Shared Faith,

Sam