

Update from Reference Team regarding Brubaker Recommendations

The members of the reference team that worked with Dr. David Brubaker during the 2015-16 church year were Bill Fugate, Ajamu Kitwana, Suzanne Farrell, Andy Poremba, David Friedman, Glenn Cook, and Chris Graziano. We are pleased to offer this update on the primary recommendations that came out of our work together:

Celebrating What is Good: There is much "Good" going on at our church. We sense a more buoyant and optimistic attitude among congregants and less angst or stress in general conversation. We seem like a happier lot. We are also very pleased to see a lot of newcomers of all ages in attendance. Perhaps our new website deserves some of the credit for that. There also seems to be a resurgence of volunteer groups, which translates to a feeling of ownership and a sense of pride in our church. The Board of Trustees, staff, and membership are all benefiting from more open communication which makes us believe we are heading in the right direction. The condition and appearance of the building has also improved, especially with major capital project of the roof replacement that began in early September. Significant maintenance is also being done on the main entry doors to the church, to several of the doors of the Sanctuary, and the parking lot has been re-surfaced.

Revisiting the Governance Model: We have started our work to educate the congregation with a presentation by John Solberg to the Board and membership on how policy governance is structured and designed to be executed. The Board's work last year included regular discussion of our governance policies and responsibilities of the Board and Senior Minister. There is a lot more anticipated during this new church year, especially with the Board's focus on monitoring outcomes of the church's operations.

Restructuring the Senior Minister's Role: The Interim Senior Minister, Rev. Joel Miller, is very adept in working within policy governance as it is intended to operate. His work with the Board of Trustees will inform the role of our future called senior minister.

Enhancing Two-way Communication: Our church has seen marked improvements in both the methods and philosophy of communication among the Board, staff, and congregation. We have upgraded our church website, established Worship and Personnel Teams, and developed a Staff Covenant, among other accomplishments. The continued incorporation of openness and respect throughout our relationships and endeavors – including the implementation of the other Reference Team recommendations – may supersede the need for a dedicated Communication Team.

Engaging Conflict Well: The recommendation that the Healthy Congregations Team incorporate the functions of the proposed Conflict Resolution Team is one of Rev. Joel's priorities and is in the works for the current church year. Work on the new covenant will follow this year's work on establishing good relational patterns in the congregation and beginning the work of leading the congregation into effective conflict management. Per Rev Joel, "conflict is inevitable, but damaging conflict is not."

Fostering Intergroup Connections: As recommended, the Worship Committee is considering how best to have services that are more inclusive of all ages. The decision to change the Saturday service schedule to once per month was driven by finances and availability of our house band Orange Sky.

Nancy Brush is coordinating potluck dinners in members' homes. As people sign up for those, an effort can be made to include various generations. We need to have people from our

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congregation volunteer to organize an all church picnic to celebrate the end of the church year. Staff does not have time to do this.

Dealing with Grief and Loss: The recommendations included creating a team to help congregation through healing process and have this in place as an ongoing option approximately once a year. Rev. Tina Simpson put together a team to offer listening/healing sessions for the congregation to engage in the healing process. According to Rev. Tina, 16 sessions in total were offered between October and May. There were sessions facilitated for staff and Board of Trustees members as well. Three sessions were offered to UU Church of Canandaigua. A relatively small number of individuals took advantage of this resource. There were 84 total participants from our church. Those that did reported they found it helpful. We need to determine whether and how to continue to offer similar opportunities.

Sustaining our Church's Financial Future: This was a year for shoring up the financial stability of the church. Much progress was achieved for several reasons. A large factor was that we did move more fully into Policy Governance so that our Interim Senior Minister took charge of budgeting and financial projections, and meets with the treasurer regularly. Canvas expectations were aligned with factual information of membership, not on hopes and dreams. We have a Financial Advisory Committee-Board of Trustees (FAC-BOT) team advising the Board on finances, as input is requested. We emerged from the last fiscal year with a sound understanding of our true membership and pledging level. Decisions about programming are being informed by our available budget. The Board of Trustees is more involved.