

UUFD Review of Ministries Task Force Report

Summary of Findings

June 2019

UUFD's Policies require a review of ministries every three years. The goals of his review are:

- To call attention to the mutual, relational nature of ministry and the respective responsibilities of all, including the congregation, who contribute to its success;
- To consider how we are doing and identify what is needed from each other and/or from outside resources to better accomplish our mission;
- To help the Minister and the congregation to remain motivated, creative, and flexible; and
- To recognize and celebrate our accomplishments toward achieving our mission;
- For the 2019 Review, key areas of ministry for the Task Force's focus will include:
 - Worship
 - Faith Formation
 - Social Justice
 - Hospitality
 - Pastoral Care

THE PROCESS

Given that 2018-19 was Rev. Katie Kandarian-Morris' third year of called ministry, in October 2018 the Board appointed a Ministerial Review Task Force (MRTF), composed of Allison Andersen, Tekla Miller, and Ken Rice to design and conduct the first ever Review of Ministries for UUFD. The performance review process included input from Ministry teams, the Board and general membership, including those who have recently joined, to assess the contributions of the Minister and the congregation in forwarding our mission and the goals identified in the Ministry Agreement.

The Policies also require that the MRTF provide to the Board a written report of their findings, including key insights, and any recommendations, together with any written comments the Minister chooses to include, and provide a summary of the Review to the members. The MRTF met with the Board, including Rev. Katie, in executive session on April 23 to present their report. The following is the Board's summary of the key take-aways from their review.

PARTICIPATION

While there were opportunities for every member to give feedback, a total of 74, or just about half of the current members, participated in one or more of the group review sessions and/or individual opportunities to comment. The Board considers this to be a sufficient sample, allowing us to trust that the themes presented to the Board are broadly representative. We thank the members and friends of the Fellowship who gave their time and attention to this endeavor. By providing their diverse perspectives we productively increase our awareness of issues and continue to improve and expand on the delivery of our mission.

FINDINGS

Overall, the MRTF found that members' perception of how we are delivering on our various ministries was quite positive. We are meeting our mission and serve as a beacon for social justice in our community.

Our **Worship Arts Ministry** excels at broadening the accessibility for the congregation and making opportunities to connect in worship in various ways. Worship services are professional, of high quality and well designed and make the best use of the facilities we have. Rev. Katie sermons are highly valued for their thought-provoking and inclusive nature, as are the pulpit guests she invites. Her presence in, impact on, and commitment to the local community is valued for the recognition it brings to the mission of UUFD. We have a supportive, friendly, social, belonging, and welcoming congregation. Our vitality is a direct result of broad membership participation. The variety of programs offered are both social and spiritual. Our growth is appreciated, as is the increased structure we have employed to help manage our operations. We would benefit from an expanded chancel, enhanced sound quality and finding solutions to the crowding at the entry of the Sanctuary on Sunday mornings.

Our **Faith Formation Ministry** is expanding as we have grown. We are creatively changing the way we have traditionally thought about "Sunday School." The new facilities at Columbine House have added to the opportunity to design new, innovative programs. Three themes emerged for further attention:

- Continue to work on keeping the Sunday Service, especially the Reflection period, coordinated with the children/youth FF program;
- Encourage ways to foster deeper connections in Covenant Groups
- Keep looking at ways to more deeply engage and challenge children and youth and adults

Our **Hospitality Ministry** has done well at remediating and fine tuning the crowding we experience in Bowman Hall on Sunday mornings and at our increasingly well-attended events. The members of the Hospitality Team gracefully make the best use of the crowded and non-professional kitchen facilities. Improvements suggested include a need for a co-coordinator, additional multi-generational activities, and more emphasis on recycling to produce less waste and meet our environmental responsibility.

Our **Social Responsibility and Justice (SRJ) Ministry** continues to assist in maintaining our status as a Welcoming Congregation. They seek out and act on many robust recommendations to meet needs identified in the community. Beyond that, they keep us engaged with attention to broader regional and national social justice issues and needs. We are increasingly recognized in the community as publicly and fully committed to social responsibility and justice. Members identified a need to heighten the congregation's awareness of environmental concerns and highlight that in more varied, programmatic ways throughout the year.

The **Caring Team**, operating from its necessarily confidential ethic, continues to meet a key need of the Fellowship for support. They are well-organized, highly functional in staying connected to fellowship needs. Because of the under the radar nature of their work, it is not clear to members how robust their connection with members' caring needs is and whether or not expectations of members served by the Team are met.

The **new members** who participated in the Review agreed that UUFD is a community which accepts varied religious beliefs and values, has a high commitment to provide for members to participate in

social justice and community improvement efforts. They were especially appreciative of the insightful and challenging messages to the congregation delivered by Rev. Katie from the pulpit. They were interested in having more opportunities to develop deeper interpersonal relationships, and being aware of more ways for new members to learn about and become involved in UU and UUFD, especially with regard to social justice activities.

A few themes emerged that can be attributed to the **general congregation**, since they were received from various groups that participated. By and large, the participants feel that UUFD is meeting its mission and, in particular, is a beacon for social justice within the Community. There is widespread agreement that Rev. Katie has exceeded expectations in many ways. There is concern about constraints due to our cramped facilities, particularly Bowman Hall. There is a subset of members who feel less engaged but desire more inclusion. For those more engaged, concern was expressed that the level of volunteering is not up to the needs of the Fellowship for leadership to maintain the level of quality that we hope for.

ISSUES BEING ADDRESSED

You will recognize that some of the concerns for improvement are already being addressed. For instance, we are hiring an Interim Director of Faith Formation, part of whose job will be to enhance the Faith Formation program to the point that it is even more attractive to highly qualified potential permanent applicants. The SRJ Team is currently pursuing renewal of our status as a Welcoming Congregation. Further, we have recently identified co-Team Leaders and members for the Environmental Justice and Healing Racism Teams.

SHARED MINISTRY

As the Board discussed these findings, two additional themes emerged that should stimulate further discussion. The first centers around our evolution into shared ministry. We have a long history of successful lay leadership. Six years ago, we entered a robust discernment process that led to the hiring of our first professional religious leader, in the role of Developmental Minister. A significant part of that process was defining our goals for developmental ministry, which included "Develop a shared leadership approach to fellowship, governance, and ministry." It didn't take us long to realize the many benefits of professional ministry and, after only two years, we overwhelmingly voted to offer a call to Rev. Katie. And, as indicated above, we have not been disappointed at the progress we have made. While we have agreed to a clear ministerial contract with Rev. Katie, we have been less clear about changing and redefining our expectations for shared leadership as a result of the change in her role from Developmental to Called Minister.

SHARED GOVERNANCE

Coincidently with moving to professional ministry, we also embarked on a journey into a specific model of shared governance. This journey has and will continue to allow us to streamline and organize our governance and ministry functions to effectively manage the way we deliver on our mission as we continue to grow in numbers and the complexity of our organization. The Board and members have been working continually over the past six years to refine and grow our understanding and effectiveness in operating from this model.

NEXT STEPS

Both these changes are significant and complex and can, as most major change initiatives do, take time and lead to misunderstanding and confusion. Adapting and growing into these changes will continue to be an issue. The Board has become aware, as a part of the dialog resulting from the Review, that we need to have more conversations, both at the Board, and more generally among the Congregation. The discussions need to be about the change in expectations and/or assumptions due to these two major changes in the way we operate. Given our lived experience over the last several years, we are now in a position to build a more explicit, collaboratively built and widely shared understanding of what we now mean by shared ministry. A significant part of that work involves the Board and Rev. Katie working together to build annual expectations for the goals of ministry for the coming year. Also, importantly, we should have more explicit, in-depth conversations among Board, Staff, Minister, Team and Committee leaders and members. These discussions would be about how we go about conducting the business of the church in order to maximize the strengths that each individual brings. This would ensure that the relationships between and among those who are serving the church's mission are healthy, productive. When the inevitable conflicts arise, they can be healthily dealt with in the spirit of beloved community.

REVIEW OF MINISTRIES PROCESS

The second theme related to the Review process itself. This was a first foray into reviewing how we approach, value and experience the way we deliver our various ministries. The Board gratefully acknowledges the work of the members of the Task Force in creating a process to meet the Board's goals for the review. As in any first-time effort, there is much to be learned about the process as well as the information gathered. The Board three years hence will be charged with the next iteration. They need not be bound by this process, as the nature of our ministries may have changed, other dynamics in the Church may have changed and other processes may more effectively address the goals for the Review.

6/25/2019