

President's Corner
November 3, 2016

This week we forge onward with the quest to understand more about some of our committees that work behind the scenes to make it possible for our congregation to gather, learn and love together. It is true, there are many committees required to make this congregational wheel go round, but one of the more important ones is the Sunday Services Committee. I met with Hal Gurian, the current chair of this committee, and he gave me some insights into just how complex the function of this team is. I will share with you a bit of what I learned from Hal.

Themes, which serve as skeletal structures for services, are planned as far as a year in advance by Rabbi Chava and Sarah Montgomery-Richards. The Sunday Services Committee begins planning programs at least a month before they are actually presented. The whole committee only meets once a month and is comprised of several members including Rabbi Chava, Hal Gurian, Andi Kramer, Donna Stein-Harris, Paula Ward, John Bailey, Betsy Emdin, Max Old Bear, Amanda Mangiardi, Sarah Montgomery-Richards and Margaret Wozniak.

This may sound like a large group, but the show must go on every Sunday and every service requires an amazing amount of coordination. Each Sunday is assigned a coordinator who is responsible for pulling the whole thing together. Let's look at some of the major elements of every service that must be addressed by that coordinator.



Hal Gurian, UUCGT Sunday Services, Chair

It all begins with coordination with Rabbi Chava or the designated lay presenter to finalize instructions regarding the sermon topic and with John Bailey to learn about music selections. Then independent research is conducted, often via the search engine available on the UU website, to choose just the right readings to accompany the message and the music. Various congregants are then asked to present the selected readings. The coordinator also prepares the welcome message or invites another congregant to present one. All this information then needs to be formatted for the order of service which must be given to Susan Sherman for typing and an appropriate piece of art for the cover must be selected, too.

That's a lot of work and it isn't over yet. On the morning of the service the coordinator must insure that the sanctuary is in good order and ready for the worship service to begin. And....the alter must be prepared. This decorating task can be simple or very complex, but it always includes a candle and the bell. And sometimes it incorporates art or flowers...loving flowers from the gardens of our congregants. (I'll not soon forget the beautiful bouquets from the gardens of Lauren Keinath this spring and summer!)

And of course, there is always clean up. The coordinator is also charged with leaving the sanctuary in the order it was found or better.

Probably one of the most challenging aspects of the task of coordinating a service is the dreaded last minute change. Whether it be weather, illness, change of heart or anything in between, any change from the assigned presenters represents an opportunity to display how versatile and creative these Sunday Services folks can be. Such changes are not infrequent, but they are managed so adeptly that the congregants rarely feel the impact on the coordinator's blood pressure.

All in all, this committee provides us all with a service that is central to our being able to gather our congregants and visitors every Sunday for the purpose of fulfilling our need for connection with each other and all that is...and the freedom to apply whatever name you wish to that which is intangible and ineffable. The benefits of these weekly gatherings are many and varied and they are not limited to what happens in our sanctuary every Sunday morning. Our Sunday gatherings and the experiences shared during that precious 60-90 minutes are and have been the spring board for almost everything that happens under our roof throughout our days and years together. They form the central cog around which all else turns in our congregation.

Please contact Hal if you think you would be interested in being a part of this very important mission.

On another note, if you have an interest in learning about any particular committee or if you are the chair of a committee you would like to have spotlighted, please contact me to discuss it. The committee for next week's column is yet to be determined.

Also, just a reminder...I will be in the library most Sundays after services to continue the Karl Love tradition of "Office Hours". Please come visit if you have something related to the congregation or the board that you would like to discuss. And...please come visit if you would just like to say 'hello' and talk about what's new in your life.

Peace in your hearts,

Linda