Rev's Reflections

The search process begins

On Sunday we gathered in the sanctuary after the service for a little chalice-side chat about the upcoming search for a new Music Director to be hired after Mike Galib leaves us at the end of December. President Nancy Richman and I had already met with the choir in August to hear their thoughts, so with the members of the whole congregation present, we focused on three main questions:

1. What have you loved about music at UUCSC?
2. What else would you like to see?
3. Moving forward, what could we do differently?

There's one thing that always stands out to me. Everyone I talk to has the best interest of the congregation at heart, and that was abundantly clear on Sunday. And as I pointed out, the folks who were present were the folks with the strongest feelings who also happened to be available. Everyone is affected by our music during services, and everyone has opinions about how best to serve the common good.

I walked away from the meeting feeling like the two most important characteristics (the "non-negotiables") of a music director are:

1. Eagerness to work with us, as we are, where we are, in alignment with our theologies and values; and
2. Ability to grow with us, while bringing out the best in the choir, and the congregation —including children.

Of course everyone praised the musicians in our midst, with hopes that we'll get to hear more from them. Perhaps during an interim period. Perhaps more long term.

Speaking of an interim period, in light of the budget deficit and the recent discovery that we urgently need a new roof over the sanctuary, a few folks brought up the idea that it may be best to wait a bit before permanently hiring a new person, so that we can regain our financial stability. We could hire an interim or fee-for services musicians for a couple Sundays per month as we rely on our own members for the remainder of the services. That of course would mean more coordinating by the Music and Worship Committees, but given our abundance of skills, it could work out well.

Lots of ideas came up, almost all of which were met with enthusiasm and openness to experimenting.

In compliance with our personnel manual and best practices suggested by the Unitarian Universalist Association, your board and I will work together to assemble a search committee. We'll keep you posted as things progress.

Please look forward to Nancy's thoughts in next week's newsletter.

In Peace,
Rev Denis