

Never forget the nine most important words of any family:

I love you. You are beautiful.

Please forgive me.

H. Jackson Brown Jr.

These past few weeks have been difficult for our UUCP family, to say the least. We know that decisions to eliminate staff positions and delay changes in the bathroom signage have caused pain in our community. We have heard expressions of grief, anger, mistrust, and anxiety. We are incredibly sorry that actions of the Board have contributed to the grief that members are experiencing.

We have also heard expressions of hope, a sense of purpose, and resilience. Where does that hope and faith in ourselves come from? It is grounded in who we are. A community that begins and ends with love. We are people who believe in our souls that every living being is beautiful. We exist because the work we do together within our walls and in the world is important.

We offer the following updates with humility and in the spirit of transparency. We welcome continued input as to how we can do better. We love you. You are beautiful. Please forgive us.

Ministerial search is in the closing stages. Our hard-working search committee is now traveling the country to meet and observe candidates for the position of called minister. While there is no guarantee that a "match" will be found, the process is expected to culminate with a late April visit by our chosen candidate and a congregational vote in on May 5.

Construction to be completed as planned. The patio is being poured and the air conditioning will be installed in coming weeks. With a stewardship plan where we all contribute to our future, backing from our UU Foundation of Phoenix, and a new financial plan, all phases of construction will be completed as planned.

Bathroom signage to be pilot-tested soon. The Board of Trustees and UUCP's newly-formed Inclusion Team are committed to making a radically inclusive update to our bathrooms and signage. The *Transforming Hearts Collective*, an external consulting group, facilitated a very meaningful service on gender inclusion on February 3. They helped us appreciate the pain and exclusion experienced by trans, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming members of faith communities, including UUCP. Some UUCP members are hurt by the lack of action on bathroom signage; others are anxious about the change. Using input from youth, staff, concerned members of all gender identities, and *Transforming Hearts*, the Inclusion Team has studied best practices. Stay tuned for a Basic Human Needs Map that informs members and guests where to hydrate, nourish, relieve, rest, or wiggle, with

relevant physical signage. The Team is working towards a March 17th rollout and will welcome comment from all members.

Our mortgage has been renewed. After UUCP submitted revised budgets and financial documents, our current lender agreed to renew the existing mortgage for two more years. This is very good news because it allows us time to locate another lender.

Our books are now balancing: Through expense cuts and additional giving by members, our books are now balanced and the congregation looks financially responsible to lenders. Our new budget is leaner and more realistic and gives a clearer financial picture to ministerial candidates.

Financing for our future: Led by Treasurer Larry Reed, a team has held constructive meetings this week with two financial institutions. The UU Foundation has offered financial support if needed. This means that we can complete our construction project as planned and plan for a bright future. Thanks to Larry Reed, Diana Ashley, Smoot Carl-Mitchell and Duke Plattner for their financial leadership.

Increased financial oversight. The Board of Trustees has increased its oversight of UUCP finances. Under a new reporting structure, a committee of financial experts reports directly to the Board, replacing an outdated and unmanageable system which relied largely on the office manager to provide oversight.

Volunteers are streaming in. Orientations for new office volunteers were/will be held on the Sundays of February 24 and March 3rd. Numerous volunteers have come forth and the staff are busy screening, placing, and training them.

Reorganized office processes. In recent months the staff have streamlined and improved many of the management processes in the office, and that effort is ongoing. One example is developing simpler financial statements to share.

Improved stewardship processes. With the help of an external consultant we are making it easier for members of all income levels to support UUCP. We are improving record keeping and making our fundraising progress more visible to members.