

Minister's Report
All Souls Board of Trustees
September 12, 2018

Overview:

It is good to be back at All Souls after my three months of sabbatical. I felt the strain of moving into our growth plan last year, and I am sure that you did too. For me, the sabbatical period was a useful reset and renewal period; I hope it was for you too.

We were able to engage the congregation last year in the capital campaign by making the stakes clear and high – that we would be either on a trend of decline or growth. That pressured environment is effective but not sustainable because of the stress it also creates. The leadership of an organization – paid and volunteer – sets the tone, and the tone we need now is one of stability and confidence. It is important that we listen, be transparent, adapt when needed, and communicate. Communication especially through our relationships is particularly important since this is the currency of congregational life. If you express doubt or misgivings to those beyond the board, the congregation is likely to lose the determination and fortitude to proceed. Within board meetings it will offer input and raise concerns as you have them.

Numbers:

Here are our attendance numbers for the past several months, in comparison for the previous two years. Though I heard nearly-universally positive things about Rev. Breeden, attendance was lower over July and August.

	2016	2017	2018
March Adults	143	127	137
March Kids	29	26	31
April Adults	147	140	139
April Kids	34	28	30
May Adults	130	124	130
May Kids	31	22	22
June Adults	120	104	119
June Kids	6	13	18
July Adults	130	111	97
July Kids	20	17	17

August Adults	123	139	122
August Kids	17	30	40

Communication:

Particularly since my parental leave, I have seen and heard a number of people voice concerns about breakdowns in communication. To better assess what is happening and to get ideas for how to improve things, I am hosting a Congregational Conversation on how we communicate on September 23 after the service. This is likely to be valuable for the board as well.

Leadership Development and Volunteerism:

For many years, we have identified leadership development as an important and urgent need. Now that I have more capacity with Rev. Kayla’s arrival, I plan for this to be one of my areas of focus this church year. Building upon feedback from committee chairs and team leads, the Program Council is planning on offering monthly leadership developments sessions, on the first Wednesday of the month; with a 30-minute pitch-in prior. The goal is to build face time with present and emerging leaders, and to build the capacity and contextual knowledge that will help communication and functioning going forward. To help with this, I have been recruiting 2-3 members with skills and passion for leadership development to help me design and lead this effort.

The Program Council is also responding to requests for a volunteer fair. This is scheduled for October 14, and we will include a committee/team processional during the service to build excitement and visibility. The staff are also planning on a “partner” organization fair (featuring our Share the Plate organizations) for the Spring.

The staff team has resumed a practice of sending out a weekly “thank you “ card to a congregant.

Staffing:

Adding staff, especially a new minister, is a big deal! It also necessitates work being done a little differently. The Mid-America Region offers, at no charge, a “Start-Up” workshop that helps the incoming staff member/minister and lay leadership name some unspoken assumptions and/or important priorities and sensitive areas. This helps avoid some unnecessarily missteps or miscommunication. Scheduling these is tight as the regional staff conducts dozens across multiple states. **Our start-up for (both Revs. Kayla and Sarah Gettie) is tentatively scheduled for the night of Friday October 26 and the day of Saturday October 27. Please plan to come, and if the board could organize the food that would be great.**

Director of Children's and Community Programming: Rev. Sarah Gettie's start was a bit odd (timed right before my sabbatical) but overall she has settled in well, and has done a great job launching the church RE program. She is also doing a good job overseeing the other RE staff of Alison (re assistant), Robert (Youth Director), and Carey (the newly-hired nursery assistant). As this program gets its feet, she will broaden her attention to the question of how to do community programming. We have named an outward facing OWL program and intersecting with our Freedom School as two components of this.

Congregational Life Minister:

Rev. Kayla began on August 14th, and she enjoyed getting to know those at All Souls better. She has left right in, meeting people, connecting with congregant teams in her portfolio areas, and participating in worship leadership. She has been doing a great job helping me think through how to do team ministry. She, Sarah Gettie, and I will continue to meet on a regular basis to think through how to most effectively partner in our work.

Facility Manager: The personnel committee is putting together a hiring team to work with me on filling this need. We have also brainstormed ways to spread the word about this contract opportunity.

Membership position:

Thank you for approving this position and for your input. We have posted the position and our doing outreach.

Member Recruitment:

We had 5 non-members attend *Exploring UU* last Sunday, and I am leading *Path to Membership* on September 16. I am also leading a five-week class in October, *Roots & Wings*, that is designed to help newcomers and members to deepen their awareness of our congregation and its functioning, and to foster connection and conversation. I intend to reform and work with the membership committee this year to make our member recruitment process robust.

Tom Mulcahy and I met to talk about next steps on our new website.

Member Retention: The staff have begun a practice of reviewing our membership rolls, and contacting anyone we know who has been absent or who has had a pastoral concern. Out of this process, we have had two families, the Barnharts and Kings, both of whom would like to move to inactive membership status. The reasons are that while they both appreciate and feel aligned with All Souls, they are very burned out because of family demands and do not feel that they have either the capacity to give or to receive from All Souls. I also talked to Mark and Carri

Genovese, who similarly appreciate All Souls, but who also use their Sunday mornings for time of quiet rejuvenation at home. They are considering how to make more of an effort to come on Sundays, or explore other connection opportunities.

Worship:

Our congregational faith formation goal from a couple of years ago directed ASUC to offer faith formation opportunities (including worship) that are “culturally sensitive, match the diversity of beliefs, spiritual types and learning styles that exist here, and that are relevant and accessible to every life stage.” After some research, a modified-version worship framework developed by Marcia McFee seemed the best means to reach kinetic and visual— in addition to our usual auditory—learners. Her model and company also provided other techniques and materials to work with. With these in mind, we have shifted away from worship themes towards similar, though more interconnected, “worship series”. I have sketched out the worship series for the years, and the worship team has begun planning around this model.

Rev. Kayla has been participating in all worship calls and served as our Liturgist about twice a month. She also is experimenting with ways for the congregation to engage in “full-week faith”, assisting us in taking worship content and ideas home and applying what we’ve learned to our daily living.

Social Justice and Outreach:

Rev. Kayla, congregants, and I have been working with Faith in Indiana meetings on two main efforts: voter engagement and turnout, and blocking a new 800-bed immigrant detention center from getting built in Indiana. For the former, All Souls is going to host a voter turn-out phone bank, every other week over a twelve week period.

Lifespan Programming:

Children and Youth

Rev. Sarah Gettie worked tremendously hard to have our Children’s programming start off well this year. Towards this end, she recruited 12 new teachers to join 7 returning teachers. This allows some who have volunteered for many years to step back, and for volunteers to more regularly attend the worship service. Half of new teachers have been members for less than 12 months; this is a great demonstration that we can bring both new and established members into volunteer positions if the work is rewarding and if recruitment is intentional. She also responded to requests that our programming focus on UU faith identity; the selected curriculum appears popular. For our first three Sundays of the new church year, we have averaged 40 children in attendance, which is notably higher than in the last three years.

Our Whole Lives

This year, All Souls will offer Middle School OWL for 6th – 8th graders, and an abbreviated version of OWL for 2nd – 3rd graders.

RE Committee

Rev. Sarah Gettie has recruited three new Children's Faith Formation Committee members: Bruce Russell-Jayne, Emily Salinas, and Fran Lake. This committee has yet to meet, as Sarah Gettie has been focused on getting our fall classes up and running.

Youth Group

The High School Youth Group is meeting the 1st and 4th Sundays, after the regular worship/class time, to build community and connections. A goal for the fall is to create a Middle School Youth Group to also meet, likely on one of the Sundays when the High School Youth are also meeting.

Adult Programs

Kayla has also arranged one-on-one and group meetings with stakeholders in our Adult Faith Formation program. She is preparing to launch some Chalice Circle groups and some classes in the coming months. She is also connecting with our Church Retreat team about learning opportunities there.

Pastoral Care:

When Rev. Kayla and I came in in mid-August, we quickly recognized that the congregation was in a high-level of need for pastoral care. While, we both responded, Rev. Kayla has given this due attention. Over the past month, we have had eight physical pastoral meetings, two email conversations, and six phone conversations. We also worked collaboratively to meet the needs surrounding Jim Hall's death and to jointly lead his two memorial services (one informal and one formal).

Rev. Kayla has been grateful to work with our dedicated Pastoral Associates and is working to create systems of communication between Ministers so they can most effectively coordinate care for our congregation.

Rev. Sarah Gettie performed the child dedication for my son Benjamin; this is a sacramental role that she will pretty regularly perform.

Administration:

A portion of Rev. Parkers' salary needs to be allocated for housing costs. She has asked for \$1,705 for that allocation.

Building Maintenance & Repairs is running high due to a one-time charge of \$3,176.45 for the new listening devices and Harris Hall speaker. Additionally, there will be approximately \$3,500 in roof repair costs in September.

Housekeeping Supplies is most likely running high due to ordering in quantities that will be used during the year. Trash is high due to a billing error that will be credited to our September bill.

Professional Expense tends to be cyclical and it is expected to level out during the year. Temporary Staff should also level out as the year progresses.

Calendar Display

Nancy and Robert have set-up a table and computer in the vestibule space to now display the calendar. It is more interactive, modern, aesthetically-pleasing, and saves us paper. Robert is working on making it more engaging by adding a slideshow with directions, flyers, images, and worship series info, which means moving the computer to a more visible, central location in the atrium.

Rentals

Robert has partnered with an Aikido Dojo for them to begin hosting three sessions a week in our church. Aikido is a form of martial arts focusing on mindfulness, situational-awareness, and basic self-defense. It is meant to be accessible for the elderly. They thought the downstairs preschool space was a great environment for them, so they will be using that. They are open to our members, for a cost of \$75 a month, which Robert is trying to get changed to \$5 per class. They are also open to starting a children's Aikido class in the future, once they are getting their footing here. Their year-lease with us totals \$3900.

Man-Kind Project was considering hosting eight groups with us. They have since realized that the groups are very scattered and inconsistent in their timing, so they are skeptical about signing any sort of a lease. Robert is trying to find something that will meet their needs.

One-time rentals for October will bring in approximately \$750 for the church. These rentals include birthday parties, Halloween parties, game nights, and our space being used for theater rehearsals.

Lupus Foundation, MENSA, and SUBUD are continuing their usual leases with us.

Changes with Milton's Retirement

We have all recognized the many changes in responsibility that occur with Milton's retirement. Robert and Nancy have met with Milton to discuss roles and responsibilities. Robert and Nancy are responsible for opening and locking the door during the days while they are in the office. Milton is responsible for opening and locking the doors on nights and weekends. Milton has also accepted the responsibility of doing climate control for all groups, meetings, and rentals.

Safety and Security

Part of caring for our congregation is thinking about the safety and security of those for whom we are responsible. There is a lot to consider as part of this. The Center for Congregations is offering a workshop on September 27 that will focus on a total facility approach, which includes trends, practices, techniques and processes that are applicable to every size congregation. I plan on sending a staff person, but as the board is the ultimate fiduciary of the congregation, having board representation would also be good.

ACTION and DISCUSSION:

- **Vote to Approve Rev. Kayla's housing allowance**
- **Save Oct 26-27 for the dual Start-up**
- **Identify board member(s) to attend Safety and Security Workshop on Sept 27**