**Minister’s Report**

**All Souls Board of Trustees**

**June 12, 2019**

**Overview:**

*Proposed focus for Summer*:

In Lieu of reflecting on the state of the Church at large, as that would not feel appropriate for someone filling this role in a short-term capacity, I would like to propose an area of focus for the congregation this summer. I propose that we focus on communication in these next two months, as a board and staff, and encouraging other committees and teams to do the same. In this Summer of Renovations, I am aware that communication will become particularly important for us all.

I would suggest that we might begin to ask ourselves these sorts of questions at the ends of meetings, to help our internal and external communications grow as we do:

* *Who should know about what we discussed or decided?*
  + *Who should be…brought in the loop, followed-up with, informed?*
* *How should this information be communicated?*
  + *In person meeting, phone call, personal email, group email, church publications, etc.*
* *Who is responsible for this communication, and by when should it be completed?*

I have heard us all reflect on how communication breakdowns are a problem in our congregation. In addition to being logistically and programmatically difficult, I also think this takes a toll on our relationships with one another. I want to assure you all that this is not a unique congregational problem – but we can perhaps become more unique by slowly but surely addressing this! Would the Board like this to be a focus for lay and staff leaders over the summer? *(Included in discussion/action items.)*

*Numbers:*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2016/2017 | 2017/2018 | 2018/2019 |
| August Adults | 123 | 139 | 122 |
| August Kids | 17 | 30 | 40 |
|  |  |  |  |
| September Adults | 129 | 131 | 114 |
| September Kids | 27 | 33 | 30 |
|  |  |  |  |
| October Adults | 123 | 125 | 102 |
| October Kids | 27 | 24 | 23 |
|  |  |  |  |
| November Adults | 149 | 135 | 121 |
| November Kids | 28 | 30 | 27 |
|  |  |  |  |
| December Adults | 110 | 159 | 128 |
| December Kids | 27 | 25 | 22 |
|  |  |  |  |
| January Adults | 138 | 136 | 95 |
| January Kids | 27 | 35 | 29 |
|  |  |  |  |
| February Adults | 140 | 134 | 123 |
| February Kids | 29 | 35 | 32 |
|  |  |  |  |
| March Adults | 127 | 137 | 117 |
| March Kids | 26 | 31 | 29 |
|  |  |  |  |
| April Adults | 140 | 139 | 145 |
| April Kids | 28 | 30 | 30 |
|  |  |  |  |
| May Adults | 125 | 130 | 114 |
| May Kids | 22 | 23 | 21 |

**Reporting on our Congregational Goals**

**Faith Formation:**

***All Souls recognizes that we are life-long learners, and offers a full range of faith formation opportunities that are culturally sensitive, match the diversity of beliefs, spiritual types and learning styles that exist here, and that are relevant and accessible for every life stage. Our faith formation process exists to help our members learn and live UU values in their daily lives.***

Worship

We are relieved that there is not the need to move locations for worship, but know it is a possibility we might need to be unexpectedly flexible for a Sunday. If this occurs, presence, assistance and non-anxious leadership from our lay leaders will be important in ensuring an easy Sunday morning experience for all.

May attendance is down from past years, though reception and feedback to services I have heard has been mostly positive. Worship Services in the past month have included: *Celebrating and Supporting Mothering, Youth Bridging Service, Who Do We Honor? (Memorial Day), Unabashedly Here and Proud (Pride Service), and Membership Sunday*. This has been a month of one-off services, many centered around Holidays. It does seem that our worship themes tend to have a particularly high attendance, so we might want to consider combining these into one them in future years.

There were new visitors who came specifically for our Pride Sunday and the Trans 201 session we had. This shows that our outreach on social media has led to some desired results, with new folks who are needing and wanting our message hearing it and coming through our doors.

Children and Youth Programming

The Faith Formation classes’ average attendance for the month of May is at 21 kids/Sunday and we have a few newer families who continue to visit and express interest in being a part of our community, one of whom registered their child last month. We enjoyed an Intergenerational Worship on one Sunday in May.

*Committee*

After one church year of service and with a greater desire to be less tethered, Bruce Russell-Jayne stepped down from the Children’s Faith Formation Committee. Bruce contributed a lot of wonderful ideas to the committee and he will be missed. The committee is down to three members.

*Classes*

We have held one Sunday of our summer session of classes and it was a hit! The high school class is more spiritually and theologically-geared this summer with its study of goddesses and the Messy Art class got started without a hitch as we explored the theme of the rainbow and Pride.

*Youth*

Our youth pride prom was a hit and those “in the know” in our community enjoy spreading the word about this opportunity we offered. It is Sarah Gettie and Robert’s to make this an annual event so that each year, it grows in magnitude as a service in our city.

Adult Programming

Older Adult groups continue to meet twice a month, and the Adult Forum has enjoyed a greater diversity in topic, with more leaders. Our May 19th session on “Addiction Affects us All” was particularly popular, with 30 people in attendance. Both the size and the content of the session, as well as depth of sharing from those in attendance was spectacular.

There will not be new adult programming over the summer, though existing ones will continue as plans for new programming at the start of the church year are being made.

Leadership Development

The leadership seminar series is concluded, and plans for next year are in the May Minister’s Report to the Board.

Building the Beloved Community

Before Mother’s Day and on it, we joined teams with Heartland and UUI to take part in a national effort to bail black mothers out of jail. This call came from our national group, Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism. Together with our sibling congregations we hosted an online panel on May 10th talking about the effort and how it came to be.

The conversation of a dozen of us was rich and deep, and all who attended learned and grew together. On Mother’s Day, we heard briefly about this effort and had a collection for the effort while placing flowers into a paper chain. All in all, we raised an impressive total of $1,135.81. This is something to be proud of, and indicates that we are capable of quickly raising funds for justice issues we care about! This was even a new issue and effort in the congregation, which makes the funds raised that much more impressive.

Eco Justice and Environmental Justice efforts, such as being certified as a green congregation and working on our former Green Teams goals of increasing the garden space in our garden:lawn ratio are underway and moving this summer.

Young Adult Programming

We received notice from the Center for Congregations that we were accepted into their Emerging Adult (young adult) program. This provides us with support, resources, and the opportunity to apply for up to $30k in matching funds. A group of young adults and others are excited to work on this project, and will be meeting this month. I am also applying for a $2-3k grant through the UUA for this work.

**Congregational Life:**

***All Souls actively practices the art of hospitality to welcome and affirm all who come through our doors. Appreciating each other, we offer compassionate care and accompaniment to each other as we journey through life. All Souls embraces diversity in all its forms, seeks to mirror the demographics of the Indianapolis metro community, and provides opportunities to learn from that diversity.***

Membership

This is a note from March re: Inactive member designations:

*John Murphy wants to have a conversation after July 1st re: moving folks to the Inactive status in our database as the Finance Committee felt this was beyond their purview when they discussed this.  He wondered if that would be something that the Membership Coordinator, Senior Minister and member of the Stewardship Committee/Finance Committee would determine after the start of the new fiscal year as there is no formal designation of how that happens - if a member/friend has no contribution of record in the last fiscal term.*

*Growth:*

Allison has been taking advantage of the many resources available through the UU Association of Membership Professionals (UUAMP) and is enjoying learning about growth averages and patterns, welcoming strategies, and suggestions for greater retention. This has been something she has focused on since she was hired and hopes to have a bit more time over the summer to take advantage of these resources as Ingathering approaches!

*Visitors:*

To properly understand this designation there may need to be some clarification.  We had 10 people who marked on their Connection Card that they were first or second time visitors in May.  Allison has been doing counts of folks that look to her to be Visitors. Considering Allison does not yet recognize all our members, her counts are inaccurate. That said, she counted 32 Visitors at Sunday services over the course of the month.

There are also a large number of folks that 1)are not members 2)after their 3rd visit mark "Regular Attender" on their Connection Card (if they turn one in) 3) may or may not be contributing financially to the church.

Allison has created documentation to better track this group of people and at this point has 40 people who fit in this category and are attending programs, volunteering at the church and definitely consider themselves part of our church community. Some of these people are also pledging so are now officially considered Friends, though many others contribute with unmarked donations in the plate.

*Members:*

Our total number of Members: 264, our total number of Friends: 58. We currently have 123 Members listed in Inactive status.

*Sunday Greeters:*

Our Greeter team volunteered 15+ hours in May for our Sunday morning Greeting & Hospitality.  Continuing our work as a Welcoming Congregation, Allison is scheduling a Membership Team meeting and Rev. Kayla or Robert Thompson will be invited to provide Trans 101 for those on the Membership Team who were not able to attend the program when it was previously offered.

*Outreach:*

12 people were registered for the Exploring UU and Path to Membership combined program on May 11th. Unfortunately 4 people had to cancel that day, but we had a good group and added 4 members.

Our latest Roots and Wings program began June 3rd. There are 7 registered, including long-time members and one-time visitors. We are lucky to have Board Vice-President Diane Kennedy co-leading this program!

Our next Exploring UU will be July 7th and Path to Membership July 14th after the service with Rev. Kayla.

Allison has set tentative dates for the next church year for all Membership programs.

Ollie and Barb Howe will be hosting a "Newcomers Coffee" after church the first Sunday in June. We will be alternating a Newcomers Coffee with a Newcomers Tour over the summer and see what our response is.  Allison will be leading the first Newcomers Tour after the Membership Service June 9th.

*New Members:*

4 attendees of our Path to Membership program signed the book this month, Mike O'Rourke, Danny Wood, Ellen Mathia and Richard Propes.

During one of our Staff meetings in May, Allison held a brief orientation for the Staff of the members that have signed since she took her position in November.  The staff reported this as being very helpful in recognizing new members and having background and conversations about where folks might best put their time and talents.

*Engagement:*

Connection Card responses continue to be very useful helping the Membership Team and other staff respond to Members & Visitors needs and questions regarding membership, pastoral concerns, spiritual support and engagement opportunities.

Allison has noticed an uptick in Connection Cards being filled out when her "Section Leaders" encourage people to fill them out during the service. She also now keeps cards for Visitors at the Welcome Table.  We are numbering the Connection Cards by section to better track which area of the Sanctuary seems to be most responsive which will allow us to respond to that issue.

As coffee hour is the most immediate engagement vehicle, we have started focusing on having enough seating in the social hall as well as making the Atrium a spot where folks feel more comfortable gathering as this is where Allison and her team are after the service.

*Integration:*

In keeping with the suggestions given in the "Building Your Volunteer Team" workshop in February, we have begun better identifying and tracking both skills and volunteer opportunities of visitors, members and new members. We are requiring a "job description" for volunteer requests to make sure volunteers have a manageable work load with the expectations clearly laid out at the outset.  We hope to create a culture of non-judgement with room for mistakes (it's FUN to volunteer at All Souls).

Allison contacted Greg regarding several newer regular visitors who are interested in offering their musical talents to All Souls and he quickly responded to their requests. We are looking forward to integrating those folks into All Souls in this way.

*Ongoing:*

Allison is creating more foundational documents for Membership to help in the possible transition to a new member database that includes a Member's life-long engagement with All Souls as well as better tracking of Visitor contacts and responses.

Allison is contacting new members several times a month to check in on their time at All Souls and offering options for programs, volunteering and Sunday morning activities as is needed.  The response so far from those that have signed the book and/or have been regular visitors since the Membership Coordinator role has been staffed, is positive. The congregation has also been very helpful in identifying to Allison and myself those that appear to need more assistance in engagement and integration, or pastoral support more generally.

Pastoral Care

Though I was on study leave or away on vacation for much of May, I had 5 in person meetings, one significant pastoral phone call and one significant pastoral email exchange since the last board meeting.

The Pastoral Associates met on May 1st, and meet again for a retreat and training on Saturday, June 22nd.

The Chronic and Terminal Support Group continues to meet once a month with Rev. Kayla. They met on Monday, June 10th, and will meet again on Monday, July 1 from 6:30-8pm.

Rev. Anastassia was able to meet with Mike Vlantis before he passed away, and has been meeting with his family to plan his service on Saturday, June 15th at 5pm. She was also present for the service of Julian Coleman, and offered a few words on him at this service.

Ollie Howe is leading an effort to collect memories of Rev. Bruce Clear, so they might be shared among us and with his family. Andrea Vermulan is working on a more information tribute to him, in line with what he wrote about All Souls’ past ministers.

We continue to post pastoral updates in our publications, and I want to make sure the Board is aware of this.

**Congregational Life:**

***Implement sound and transparent systems of governance and resource management to guide growth.***

Communication

*Brand Refresh*

Three staff/lay leaders will meet again on Thursday, June 13th with the folks from Matinee Creative (<https://www.matineecreative.com>). They are putting together a business proposal to re-design our brand, develop language and images that can be used to effectively communicate to our target audience across a variety of vehicles, and to help train us to implement these marketing tools correctly. Half of the cost of this work is funded by the Center for Congregations, and the Board has already allocated money for the second half.

*Website*

Our website has 2,552 views in May. (Not necessarily from unique/new viewers.)

Rentals

Our rentals continue to go strong, and we have added one additional Buddhist Meditation group that meets in our RE wing.

Personnel

Rev. Anastassia completed annual reviews with staff before taking her study leave and vacation time.

Robert has been working with our Safety Team on getting procedures in place before he leaves his position as Office Manager. He has also been providing support for the new position of Office Manager, and nterviews have been scheduled for that position.

The Director of Children and Community Programming role is also posted. Cherilyn continues to be a great resource for the RE program, and will likely be an even more important resource during the time of transition in the DCCP position. Rev. Sarah Gettie continues trying to hire for the Nursery Coordinator position. With Sarah Gettie’s resignation, she is doing her best to equip volunteers and staff alike to keep the program running as smoothly as possible once she is gone.

Allison reported that Anastassia had offered she go up to 25 hours a week, from her current 20. Allison has some large projects to work on before the church year starts, and is more available with Cat out of school. She has offered to go up to 25 hours per week from now until August 7th (shortly after Ingathering). Would the Board like this to occur? I have stipulated that keeping a clear timesheet would be a requirement for this change occurring over the summer.

Rev. Kayla has been meeting with all staff for regular supervision as needed. This is once a week for Rev. Sarah Gettie and Allison, and check-ins as needed with Robert. Nancy Baney and Greg Sanders do not require much supervisory attention, but she has and will continue to check-in with them on how things are going as needed.

**Our Presence in the Broader Community:**

***All Souls is recognized for its community engagement and for joining with interfaith and secular partners in actions that embody our shared values in the public sphere. All Souls opens ourselves to our neighbors to build relationships with those beyond our doors.***

*Continuing Local Outreach*

All efforts and relationships continue, though Rev. Kayla had less time to do this intentional work while away, and will have a bit less time this summer. Representatives of Kheprw Institute will be present to do a conversational service with me over the summer.

*Freedom School*

Rev. Sarah Gettie and Robert continue to liaise with the Freedom School, who will begin their programming on June 17th. They still need volunteers to serve lunch – even if you can just do one day!

**Other:**

Rev. Anastassia will be coming in for specific tasks (hiring, Mike Vlantis service), for which we are grateful. We’re also trying to let her really have her break, so please bring new things to me before going to her.

**Action and Discussion:**

* **Communication focus over the summer?**
* **Request to move some members to Inactive in July (who to be on this team)**
* **Allison Z up to 25 hours until August 7th?**
* **Card of Gratitude for Ann and Andrew Skinner for “Addiction Affects Us All” Adult Forum**