

Report Summary to the Board of Directors

From the Interim Co-Ministers

Unitarian Universalist Society of Geneva

The Reverends Jennifer Innis and Patrick Price

December 11, 2018

The current structure of this interim ministry is based on the developmental tasks of the interim congregation and the priorities listed in the Application for Interim Ministry.

The developmental tasks of the interim congregation include:

- HERITAGE– Reviewing how the congregation has been shaped and formed.
- LEADERSHIP– Reviewing member needs and the congregation’s ways of organizing and developing leadership
- MISSION– Defining and redefining sense of purpose and direction
- CONNECTIONS– Discovering and nurturing the relationships a faith community builds outside of itself
- FUTURE– Preparing for the next era of leadership
- In addition to the above list, the sixth task is to oversee the ongoing life of the congregation.

The ministerial priorities as stated in the Application for Interim Ministry include:

Of greatest importance is preparing the congregation for new ministry after 40 years of service by our outgoing Senior Minister, the Rev. Dr. Lindsay Bates. Our rolls show 2018 membership levels at a 10-year low. In this interim period we need to evaluate and better understand the underlying factors for this trend and how to best address them as part of our vision for our future. In addition, a 2017 fall survey of lay leaders listed the following areas of preferred focus:

- Building and healing relationships and developing emerging lay leadership
- Retaining and involving UUSG membership
- Strengthening our lay-led LRE program
- Building increased and committed pledging by members and friends
- Expanding a sense of responsibility within the congregation for the success of the church
- Providing an objective perspective to develop new ideas and address areas for improvement

General Comments/Observations

- This report covers the highlights since the last report to the Board on November 13, 2018.
- Much of the past month included getting to know the congregation as it enters the holiday season.
- Many thanks to the Board for approving the hire of a temporary congregational administrator to cover Christine Imielski’s family leave in January, February, and March. Patrick is working on the hiring process. Many thanks to Lisa Rittenberry for being available to add time to her schedule as part of the staffing plan.

- Interim questions for this month include: How are special fundraisers connected to the governance structure? For example, the Auction, the Cookie Walk, and Swedish Days seem to rely on individual and small group efforts without assistance or oversight from Stewardship or Finance. How do adult programs such as the Women's Retreat and the Women's Circle fit with the governance structure? Who is accountable and who is responsible? Who has the authority to create and publicize programs and determine whether they are consistent with the Society's mission? The Council also took up the question of its purpose and uses in the leadership structure.
- Based on feedback from the Interim Startup and in conversations with other members and leaders, Patrick and Jennifer seek to make cultural and stylistic differences more visible, as well as respond thoughtfully to questions raised about leadership approaches in ministry. The best way to address questions and concerns is through direct conversation. Patrick and Jennifer are grateful for the direct conversations that already take place. More are welcome.
- The ministers still wrestle with how to reduce their time. While it is useful to be able to be in two places at once, and to be able to hand off responding to a pastoral concern from one to the other, Patrick and Jennifer are both working full time. One way they are scaling back their time is to accept pulpit supply at nearby congregations when they are not leading worship at UUSG.

Worship

- Jennifer and Patrick are taking turns as the worship leader on a given Sunday. Patrick led worship on November 18 and December 2. Jennifer led an all-ages Thanksgiving service on November 26 as well as worship on December 9.
- Jennifer is preparing a Christmas pageant for December 16. Many thanks to Tracy Dullea, Nancy Christensen, Jennifer Klein, Lynn Fisher McCanne, Ellie Montgomery, and The Band for assistance with creating the pageant. Many thanks also to the youth who agreed to be characters and voices for the pageant.
- Patrick, Jennifer, the Worship Team, and a cast of thousands are putting together the services for December 23 and Christmas Eve. Christmas Eve includes the family service at 3pm, a lessons and carols service at 8pm, and a lay led candlelight service at 11pm.

Lifespan Religious Education

- Jennifer led the Religious Education Town Hall on December 2. About 36 people participated, including many people with children in the program along with other RE volunteers and invested members. The group was very supportive of the program strengths and history. Major concerns included the wear and tear on volunteers running the program without staff support and how to fund program staff. The group in general understood the importance of how the program would benefit from adding staff. A more complete report will be shared with the congregation later this month.
- Jennifer is working with Becky and Sean Hruby on how to expand the pool of staff for the Nursery. Becky and I expect to hire at least one new person as of December 23.
- After the departure of the previous facilitator, Jennifer accepted the request of the Women's Retreat Planning Team to lead the upcoming program on February 1-3, 2019.

Pastoral Care

- Jennifer is supporting the efforts of the WOW Team including communicating with Team Leads Glenda Peck and Carol Myers.
- Patrick has been handling mental health-related pastoral needs over the past month.

Rites of Passage

- Jennifer is working with the Mansfield family, and church members to prepare for the memorial of Stuart Mansfield on January 26, 2019.

Welcome Team

- Jennifer met with the Welcome Team at their regular meeting on November 18. At their December meeting, Jennifer and the Welcome Team will walk through the building and conduct a welcome audit. This review of how people enter and integrate into UUSG will help Jennifer learn the procedure and will be a chance to assess the current process.

Public Ministry

- Patrick and Jennifer are beginning to get to know other colleagues in the area. On December 3, they met the Intentional Interim Minister, the Rev. Jane Courtright, at the Congregational Church of Batavia.

Continuing Education and Denominational Activity

- Both ministers attended the regular monthly meeting of the Chicago Area Liberal Ministers (CALM) at Unity Temple on December 4.

Minister's Schedule

- Expected Sundays off include December 30, January 27, and June 2.
- Patrick and Jennifer are taking a family vacation from December 25-January 4. They will visit Jennifer's family in Massachusetts.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Innis and Patrick Price

Addendum to the Interim Co-Ministers Report:

This is a list of Action Items from the Interim Ministry Startup with Dori Davenport Thexton on November 4, 2018. These action items are not in any particular order.

- The role of the council - what is its function; is it necessary to add responsibility and accountability to its role? Or create something different to serve the purposes desired (a group to empower committees/ministry groups to make decisions and to coordinate congregational activities, not just report to each other.
- Religious Education - staffing is needed along with everything that entails.
- Communications - central coordination and functioning of all aspects of communication to/from the board, administration, ministers, council, publicity.
- Supervision and accountability for staff - clarify and communicate.
- Covenant - expand understanding of covenant to include promises about being in right relationship along with strengthening Care Committee.
- Membership committee - reinvigorate, clarify and institutionalize its duties.
- Lay pastoral care - WOW committee, same as above bullet point (?)
- Worship team - develop worship associates program and become more structured.
- Deal with staffing needs and issues during administrators maternity leave.