

Report Summary to the Board of Directors

From the Interim Co-Ministers

Unitarian Universalist Society of Geneva

The Reverends Jennifer Innis and Patrick Price

January 8, 2019

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 December 11, 2018.
- January includes a three-part series around engaging the congregation with the interim process. During the Question Box sermon on January 6, Patrick and Jennifer received several questions about interim ministry, our experience as interims, and the length of the interim period. On January 13, Patrick and Jennifer will be available for conversation and further inquiry during the Coffee with the Ministers. On January 20, the Town Hall will be an opportunity for the congregation to hear more information about interim ministry, the search process, and possibilities for adding a professional religious educator.

- Patrick and Jennifer are pleased to announce the hiring of Becky Hruby to serve as a temporary administrator during Christine Imielski's family leave. Christine and the ministers are very happy that Becky will be in the office during Christine's absence.
- Interim questions for this month include: How does the congregation understand the role and value of worship at UUSG? How might the grounds and the building exterior become both more visible and more dynamic? How does the congregation regard this time of interim ministry and the potential schedule of the search process?
- Patrick and Jennifer are working with the Transition Team to find a time to meet. Thank you to David deCoriolis for recruiting Melissa Auer to fill the vacancy left by Molly McKay Zacker. On December 20, Jennifer sent an update to the Transition Team. Attached to the update were the ministers' reports and the documents related to Board conversations around hiring a professional religious educator and the general timeline for the UUA settled ministry search process.
- Thank you to Christine Imielski for her work on the annual UUA certification process. UUSG membership remains at 249. Children and youth registration is 63. Children and youth registration for last year was 83.

Worship

- Jennifer and Patrick are taking turns as the worship leader on a given Sunday. In addition to the all ages and holiday services, Patrick and Jennifer shared a Question Box sermon on January 6.
- The pageant on December 16 went very well. A full list of thank you's and participants is in the January newsletter. One of the best moments was during the 9:30 service when Doreen Christiani and Jim Swick joined the children as they donned animal costumes and crawled down the center aisle. Tracy Dullea pulled together a wonderful music program to accompany the pageant.
- Patrick, Jennifer, the Worship Team, and a cast of thousands created the worship for December 23 and Christmas Eve. Christmas Eve included the family service at 3pm, a lessons and carols service at 8pm, and a lay led candlelight service at 11pm.
- Thank you to Thom Thomas and the Worship Team for putting together the fire service on December 30.
- Patrick is preparing a program on UU Worship in Theory and Practice for January 19. Due to the local Women's March that morning, Patrick's program will run from 1-4pm.

Lifespan Religious Education

- Patrick and Jennifer are in active conversations with members and leadership about how to add a professional religious educator as soon as possible.
- Becky Hruby and Jennifer welcomed Madeline Holtsford to the childcare team on December 20.
- Jennifer is working with the Women's Retreat Planning team in preparation for the retreat on February 1-3.

Pastoral Care

- Jennifer is starting to visit members who are not able to be part of the regular life of UUSG.

- Thank you to the Luncheonettes for hosting a lovely baby shower for Christine Imielski on November 28. About 22 members and friends attended.

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.

Stewardship

- The Stewardship Team and the ministers are working on the plan for the annual budget drive. Due to the available spaces at the food bank, the Day of Service will be on March 30. The Day of Service will not include a dinner connected to the budget drive. At this time, the annual budget drive will start on March 10 and conclude on April 13.

Welcome Team

- At their regular meeting on December 16, Jennifer and the Welcome Team walked through the building and conduct a welcome audit. Much of the conversation covered how to enhance exterior signage and how to develop the greeting team.

Continuing Education and Denominational Activity

- Both ministers attended the regular monthly meeting of the Chicago Area Liberal Ministers (CALM) at Unity Temple on January 8.

Minister's Schedule

- Expected Sundays off include January 27, March 31, and June 2.
- Patrick and Jennifer took a family vacation from December 25-January 4. They visited 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.