

ANNUAL MEETING REPORTS

October 23, 2016

Minister's Report

The Rev. James Galasinski

I started August 1st and boy was that a hot month. It seems too early to reflect back on the past 12 weeks together, but here we go. One of my first challenges was to hire a new Congregational Administrator. It took a bit longer than I would have expected but we found the exact right person in Sara Trimm. Gwen Cunningham was a great administrator for us and the good news is she will remain part of our faith community. I want to thank everyone who was involved in that hiring process, especially Carol Pynchon who also volunteered to cover duties when we were between administrators.

The first 90 days of a ministry are a chance to get to know people and how things work. While I am still getting used to the flow of the week and which meetings to attend, I do feel like I am getting to know the people that make up this congregation. I have also reached out to Beth-El in Potsdam, the chaplains at SLU, and have met other area clergy.

In general I am enjoying the high quality of life here in Canton. I get to walk to work and walk home for lunch. I get to be in wild areas in minutes.

I have made some subtle changes to Sunday Worship. I have worked with Welcoming Committee to come up with a path to membership – things that we would recommend people do before becoming a member such as attending the expanded UU 101 course.

I am most excited about the potential work coming up in support of Black Lives Matter. We have much to be proud about here. I am very grateful that the search process worked so wonderfully. I am looking forward to dreaming together and transforming lives together.

Director of Religious Education Report

Carol Zimmerman

Curriculum

Nursery provided a safe, playful space for our children under 3 years of age to grow and learn.

Spirit Play using Montessori methods allowed our Pre-K to 1st grade children to work freely at their own pace after an initial lesson.

Signs of Our Faith guided our 2nd-4th graders to do their best to live faithful lives every day. It presented fourteen traits or values that most Unitarian Universalist love, including the quest for knowledge, reverence for life, supporting one another on our faith journeys, and public witness.

Toolbox of Faith invited our 5th & 6th graders to reflect on qualities of our Unitarian Universalist faith, such as integrity, courage and love, as tools they can use in living their lives and building their own faith.

Building Bridges, a world religions program, deepened our 7th & 8th graders' understanding of the dynamic, fascinating, and varied world in which they live. It broadened their knowledge of humanity and emboldened their spiritual search.

Youth Group focused on community this year. They participated in thought provoking discussions and provided a worship service.

Special Programs

OWL (Our Whole Lives) Program for Jr High School Students models and teaches caring, compassion, respect, and justice. This holistic program that moves beyond the intellect to address the attitudes, values, and feelings that youth have about themselves and the world. We provided a weekend retreat along with ten Friday evening sessions.

LOVED (Living Our Values Everyday) Program was offered over four sessions throughout the RE year and focused on compassionate communication. We utilized the Heart to Heart Curriculum.

Fun Days were offered for all ages. During these five days over the course of the year, children choose their own fun activities like board games, arts and crafts or physical activity.

Holiday Pageant was offered on December 20 and shared the story "Not Home for the Holidays" about three travelers stranded in a bus station the evening of winter solstice.

Intergenerational Service was offered on March 6 and shared the idea of playful curiosity.

RE Sunday was offered on June 12 and shared reflections on our faith journeys. Our 5th-8th graders shared what they learned as part of RE. We also celebrated the transition for our graduating high school seniors.

Classroom Volunteers and Participants

We had 67 adult volunteers working in the RE program as teachers, assistant teachers, childcare providers, and youth group advisors. A total of 58 children and youth were registered for the program.

RE Staff

I completed my second year as Director of Religious Education. Over the course of the year, I attended many professional development webinars hosted by the Central East Regional Office. I continued in the position of Vice Chair for the Seaway Chapter of LREDA.

RE Committee

The Religious Education Committee was a strong committee of eight members. At the end of the year, two of our members stepped off the committee to focus their energies on other projects. They met on a monthly basis to determine curriculum and appropriate congregational events (see below).

RE Events

December - Holiday Decorating Party in collaboration with Welcome Committee

February - Sledding Party

March - Everybody's Birthday Party

May - RE Sundae Sunday

President's Report

Barbara Beekman

No doubt the highlight of 2016 was when our dedicated Search Committee chose James Galasinski as the candidate to be our settled minister. We had a whirlwind candidating week culminating in a unanimous congregational vote of 124-0 to call James as our settled minister.

We said some goodbyes as well: to Joel Miller who was our compassionate guide through three years of interim ministry and congregational introspection, and to Nelly Case, our Music Director who served so ably for 27 years.

In 2016 we saw many new faces on Sundays, and 13 individuals took the important step and signed the membership book.

Notably, we began the year by successfully meeting our canvass pledge goal of \$233,000.

What has impressed me most is that so many groups just continue to do the work that needs to be done, raking the leaves, teaching the children, caring for those in need, keeping the coffee flowing on Sundays, marching in parades, welcoming newcomers, watching the bottom line, recommending books, keeping us informed, gardening for the greater good, enlightening us with as a pulpit guest, or engaging us as a musician.

Thanks to all for a memorable, meaningful 2016.

Budget and Finance Committee

Milner Grimsled, Chair

Mission: to monitor the financial health of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton.

Responsibilities: to identify, define, and support those financial needs that contribute to the greater vision and work of our church; to oversee the disbursement of funds to insure the mission of the church is fulfilled; to communicate to the church community the financial needs and concerns of our church.

Budget and Finance Duties:

- a) Review monthly financial reports for Church Council
- b) Oversee bookkeeping and internal control policies
- c) Oversee appropriations to committees
- d) Recommend annual budget to Church Council
- e) Review financial policies for recommendations to the council
- f) Oversee inventory of facility
- g) Monitor the Investment sub-committee, responsible for Endowment Investments.
- h) Oversee the Olympia Brown Society (OBS) / Planned Giving sub-committee.

Membership Changes:

Pat Glover joined us as a “regular” committee member after her four years as Treasurer ended in January. And two new committee members – Brian Gardam and Somendra Pant - will attend their first Budget & Finance meeting in October.

2016 Highlights (*reference for “Duties”*):

So far this year, in addition to its ongoing duties, B&F has dealt with several singular items.

- *(e) Financial Policies* – With leadership from the Treasurer, and in consultation with the Congregational Administrator, we are updating our Financial Policies.
- *(b) Financial Procedures* – The Treasurer has drafted an internal Financial Procedures document, prompted by the recent staffing change for Congregational Administrator. These will be finalized in the near future.
- *(b) Office Accounting System* – We have worked with our outside accountant and Congregational Administrator to reorganize and improve aspects of the accounting system.
- *(f) Inventory* – completed an updated listing of our church’s Fixed Assets (non-building)
- *Cooperation with Stewardship Committee* – in planning the 2017 Canvass

Current Financial Status:

Preparation of the budget and monitoring of the financial performance are the major functional roles of the committee. The 2016 budget has proven to be largely on target as of the end of August, when adjusted for non-recurring and non-budgeted items such as Search Committee expenses.

2017 Budget:

The Committee has gathered initial input from the staff and committees for the 2017 budget. In asking for their 2017 budget estimates I asked each chair for their “maintenance” and their “growth” budget. I then used those figures to present a preliminary budget to the Budget and Finance Committee on July 21 and to the Church Council on August 3. The budget contained options regarding the two levels of funding requested by the committee chairs as well as a formula demonstrating the budget effect of different levels of Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) to staff pay rates.

After the Church Council determined the revenue goal, the budget was forwarded to the Stewardship Committee for use in their preparations for the annual canvass. The results of the canvass will be used by B&F and the Church Council to set the final 2017 budget.

B&F members include: Kevin Ball, Brian Gardam, Pat Glover, Milner Grimsled, Roger Hutchinson, David Nelson, Somendra Pant, and Jim Rudd.

Ex-officio members include: Carol Gable, Treasurer; Barb Beekman, President; and James Galasinski, Minister.