

**Minister's Report** Rev. Sarah C. Richards      **October 2017**

*Reporting period 9/13/17 – 10/10/17*

*From CUF meetings to preaching to officiating a wedding to representing CUF at various community events, this month exemplifies the many and varied tasks of my ministry.*

**Worship:** The transition in monthly theme from September's "what does it mean to be a people of welcome?" to October's "what does it mean to be a people of courage?" is natural, as being welcoming requires courage and vice versa. I preached on this idea in the sermon "Let's Get Vulnerable!"—one of the most personal, and meaningful sermons I've given. That and the other sermons during this period, "Brave Hearts" and "Our Eighth Principle" all used very different sources to approach the theme. The latter was a part of CUF's participation in the UU White Supremacy Teach-in 2 campaign, which is itself both an example of our courage as a congregation, and our UU call for continued risk-taking to dismantle systems of oppression within ourselves and our institutions. I also worked with the Sunday Service committee to plan the lay-led service, "A Light to Welcome" but after the idea stage they set everything up on their own, and I understand it went well.

Worked with each Sunday Service Facilitator in preparation for service, communicated with music coordinators, accompanists, chose hymns for all services. Compiled and submitted Orders of Service.

*Rites of passage:* officiated at the wedding of new members Joe and Mallory (Keith) Swafford in Cobden, IL. It was a beautiful ceremony, and I was so happy to be a part of this milestone in CUF members' lives. I received several compliments from wedding guests afterward—it's always gratifying to give a positive impression of Unitarian Universalism in this way.

**Counseling and Pastoral Care:** Made pastoral visits, calls, and emails. Met with Jocelyn Poppit of Centerstone to learn about their current programs. Ms. Poppit then made her presentation at the Pastoral Friends meeting. We gained a lot of good information and materials, but have not figured out how best to share it all more widely. Met with Pastoral Friends to review pastoral updates and activities.

**Practical Arts/Administration:**

- Wrote and posted monthly Minister's Report.
- Attended September BOT meeting.
- Prepared materials for and participated in BOT retreat Sept. 21-2, facilitated by Maurine Pyle.
- Met with BOT President weekly.
- Attended Officers' Meeting to set October BOT meeting agenda.
- Met or talked with RE Coordinator weekly to discuss current RE program concerns and to review progress toward professional development goals.

- Talked with Choir director as needed – this seems to work fine for now, but will revisit setting bi-weekly appointments if necessary.
- Met with Office Administrator weekly; initial elation at a newcomer’s volunteering to take over the Order of Service compilation task turned to disappointment when the volunteer’s wi-fi was not adequate for the job. We do have another possible volunteer, we need to find time to train her. Edited the weekly Bulletins.
- Met with Committee on Ministry: welcomed new member Yo Presley, discussed responsibilities for the upcoming year, made plans to view a UUA webinar on CoSMs at our next gathering.
- Met with Social Action Committee chair to discuss options for congregational social action/justice involvement.
- Attended Sunday Services meeting, planned all of the remaining lay-led services for 2017. I tested and then sent out the Sunday Services survey Sept. 29-30, giving a deadline of responses of Oct. 15. As of now, we have received 43 responses (plus 5 from SS Committee members). We will review the data at our next meeting.
- Wrote Minister’s Column for CUF Links.

### **Organizational Ministry:**

- With assistance from Membership Committee member Therese Thien, led New Members class (2 sessions) with nine participants. Two of them, Angela Watters and Damaris Miltenberger, became members after the class (two other participants were already members). I’ll be meeting with three others who missed the second session, and expect that at least a few more will take the step to membership soon.
- Led “Childcare Brainstorm Session” to review options to fund childcare, enabling parents/guardians to be more fully and regularly active in CUF leadership, service, and social events.
- Publicized and coordinated sign-ups for Covenant Groups. We have four groups with at least six members in each. Two of the groups have already had their first meeting, the remaining two will start in the next week. I facilitated the first Facilitators’ Covenant Group meeting with four of the six facilitators, I’ll have a “make up session” with those who missed as possible. This is a pretty exciting development—we have one-sixth of our membership participating in Covenant Groups!
- Attended Racial Justice Reading Group, introduced Ayn Downey, prospective community organizer, and invited attendees to donate for her training (provided by Gamaliel, the national faith-based organizing group that I’ve mentioned in previous reports) if interested. Listened to, and discussed Rev. Jon Luopa’s sermon, “The Many Faces of White Supremacy” (sent to us by former member Bonnie Cumings).

- Wrote up notes from September Carbondale Interfaith Council meeting, submitted them to CUF Links.
- Had first (of nine) one-on-one meeting/conversation with individual BOT member.
- Held final pre-wedding meeting, led wedding rehearsal for CUF new members.

**Personal Growth:** exercise, meditation, Choral Union.

**Professional Growth:** met with Spiritual Director, Family Systems coach, Mentor, minister peer group. Finished reading *The Fire Next Time* by James Baldwin.

**Teaching:** N/A

**Denominational Activities:** Attended Bi-state UU Ministers monthly gathering at Eliot Chapel in Kirkwood, MO.

**Prophetic Outreach:**

- As minister of host congregation, made brief presentation to Carbondale Interfaith Council on UU as a living tradition.
- Attended monthly Racial Justice Coalition meeting.
- Attended Mayor's Faith Advisory Council meeting, heard presentation on how congregations can address and help to prevent opioid abuse.
- Attended African American Museum of Southern Illinois' 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, along with a contingent of CUF folks.
- Met with Church Women United member, accepted invitation to lead special CWU Interfaith worship service.
- Served on a panel with UCC colleague at the Pride Festival, spoke about Unitarian Universalism and CUF's history, policies, and practices of inclusion and advocacy for GLBTQ+ people.
- Attended the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Rainbow Café Gala hosted at CUF.