

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

Reporting period 5/9/17 – 6/6/17

**During this period I developed two new ways of engaging folks throughout the month with our theme, which can foster spiritual development and community relationships.*

Worship: Developed thematic Sunday Service components (e.g. Order of Service covers, hymn selection, service scripts, slides). Developed an interactive project with flower drawings to involve congregation members of all ages over a three Sunday period: first in a participatory reflection on Mothers' Day, then in the Time for All Ages in the Graduation Sunday service, and finally posting the decorated flowers on the bulletin board to welcome people into CUF for Bring a Friend Sunday and beyond.* There was much involvement of members in Sunday Services during this period, so my responsibilities were focused on designing collaborative, cohesive services featuring different voices and views. Although I didn't take part in the annual "Shared Readings" service, I provided some ideas and support to its facilitator. Wrote and delivered the "Bring a Friend Sunday" sermon, "Looking for Joy." Extended congregation-wide invitation (in that sermon, and in my newsletter column and on Facebook) to engage with the monthly theme by sending photos, poems, songs or other expressions of finding joy in times of struggle.* As with the flower drawings, I plan to share these moments of joy on a bulletin board and hope to make it the topic of my July 2 sermon.

Led the Dedication ceremony for Victoria Young—a joyful rite of passage involving the whole congregation.

Counseling and Pastoral Care: Made pastoral care phone calls, emails, office and home visits. Attended monthly meeting with Pastoral Friends, reviewed updates, and after a thoughtful discussion, we decided to put the "Time with Pastoral Friends" on hiatus for lack of attendance/demand. Laura Van Abbema presented our continuing education portion on psychologist-Buddhist teacher Tara Brach's therapeutic meditation model <https://www.tarabrach.com/> This is a great resource for my own spiritual practice, as well as for pastoral care.

Practical Arts/Administration:

- Met in person or on the phone with BOT chair weekly or more to go over CUF happenings; met with Exec Committee to set BOT meeting agenda.
- Met with Office Assistant weekly to review tasks and short and long-term goals.
- Met or talked with RE Coordinator weekly to discuss current RE program concerns and to review progress toward professional development goals.
- Attended BOT meeting.
- Communicated with monthly music coordinators, set hymns and posted them on google calendar, communicated with accompanists.

- Participated in annual performance review meeting for the Choir Director, along with Personnel Chair/BOT VP.
- Hosted Spring Staff Appreciation dinner at Hunan, with all but one of our fine CUF staff members.
- With RE Coordinator, interviewed three candidates for the REC Assistant position.
- Sunday Services meeting rescheduled for after this reporting period; considering scheduling and time pressures, I've delayed the survey development to the summer, to implement in the fall.
- Attended RE Committee meeting
- Attended Communications meeting, discussed business advertising policy.
- Attended Membership meeting, discussed new recruitment plan for Greeters.
- Attended Welcoming Congregation meeting, made good progress on assessment form and brainstorming for future LGBTQ inclusion projects.

Organizational Ministry:

- Held last monthly meeting with Covenant Group facilitator—the Covenant Group will meet for the last time in June. We've discussed opportunities for starting up new groups again in the fall, with the "veteran" members helping to publicize, and hopefully serve as facilitators themselves.
- Wrote June newsletter column for May CUF Links.
- No one showed up to the Embodiment Theme Salon, even with added Facebook notification, so I'm putting them on hold until Fall/expressed demand.
- Led first of two New Members class sessions, with nine participants, assisted by two Membership Committee members. This was a very positive experience; the class has been redesigned to include videos and longer self introductions by participants – everyone seemed to enjoy themselves.
- Facilitated discussion during Reflection on White Supremacy Culture Teach In Saturday session; the discussion revealed differing perspectives and also a shared commitment to take further steps as a congregation to address systemic racism (though definition of those steps will wait until the fall.

Personal Growth: exercise, meditation, voice lessons. Mike and I took an anniversary road trip to IN for the Memorial Day Weekend, which provided some needed time and space together outside of our daily routines.

Professional Growth: Monthly telephone conversations with Family Systems coach, UUMA mentor, ministry peer group, and Spiritual Director. Attended monthly Bi-State UU Ministers' meeting in St. Louis.

Teaching: See New Members class mention in Org. Min. section above.

Denominational Activities: Participated in MidAmerica Region clergy videoconference on our #UUWhiteSupremacyTeachIn experience. Volunteered to serve as Central Midwest District Chapter Host during UUMA Ministry Days (before GA). Posted the Interim Co-Presidents' updates to the CUF webpage.

Prophetic Outreach:

- Attended second Gamaliel faith-based community organizing event; as reported last month the potential for regional cooperation and impact is great, but I'm not convinced that the Gamaliel method is the right fit. I'm not able to attend the next meeting that will form a steering committee, but I'll "stay in the loop" to see what transpires.
- Attended monthly Faith Community Group meeting with Mayor and City Manager, learned about preparations for the eclipse, including that houses of worship may charge for parking.
- With new Interfaith Council Liaison Vivien Feuerborn, attended Carbondale Interfaith Council potluck meeting, hosted by the Gateway Foundation. Learned about GF's alcohol and drug treatment programs and services, toured the facility.
- Attended monthly Racial Justice Coalition meeting.
- Attended monthly I Can Read! Board meeting.