Minister's Report  Rev. Sarah C. Richards  March 2018
Reporting period  2/6/18 – 3/5/18

Many outreach and inreach activities this period, making both the February (perseverance) and March (balance) themes particularly relevant to myself and my ministry.

Worship: Developed and co-led services “Side With Love,” “The History of Will*,” and “Balancing Acts.” “Side With Love,” focusing on CUF’s visibility of identity and purpose, sparked strong reactions, both positive and negative. I reached out to CUF members individually and listened to their concerns. I had planned “The History of Will” service to coincide with both Black History month (to look at the history of Black UUs) and to introduce UUA’s The Promise and Practice of Our Faith campaign for Black Lives of UU. Late in the preparation process, I discovered that the campaign had an entire worship resource packet with multiple alternatives for liturgy. *I retained some elements I’d already planned, but instead of writing “The History of Will” message, I used one of the recommended sermons, “The Healing is Not Done” by Rev. Rebekah Savage. I had programmed songs that I learned at the CENTER Institute in January, acapella tunes led by Pat York and Stephanie Reece. Those songs received positive responses; I’ll definitely use them in future services. The service served as both Denominational Affairs – informing and connecting CUF with the UUA initiative – and Worship.

Set hymns (communicated with Music Coordinators accompanists), selected readings, crafted Orders of Service drafts, Service scripts, and slides for all services that I led.

Counseling and Pastoral Care: Made pastoral visits, calls, and emails. Met with Pastoral Friends to review pastoral updates and activities, I presented the CE portion on Family Systems basics for congregations.

Practical Arts/Administration:

• Wrote and posted monthly Minister’s Report.
• Met with BOT President weekly.
• 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. Held a special meeting with CD and song leader Pat York to teach the songs for 2/25 Sunday Service.
• Met with Office Administrator weekly. Edited the weekly Bulletins.
• Recruited CUF members to share their Build Our Common Good stewardship reflections, suggested an organizing structure to their reflections, integrated them into Sunday Service scripts.
• Steady improvement in keeping Friday as my Sabbath Day over the first three weeks.
• Met with CoSM to review their mid-term evaluation. Refer to “Balancing Acts” sermon on-line for more detail.
- Wrote Minister’s Column, and Recommended Reading piece for March CUF Links.

Organizational Ministry:

- Facilitated March Facilitator Covenant Group – with seven participants, it was our largest gathering thus far (only missing one facilitator). I will look for a new date and time for this meeting, as it was apparent that we don't have enough time for our own Covenant Group as well as practical facilitation discussion.

- Attended the Congregational Conversation about the “In this Congregation, we believe...” banner. After lively discussion about various aspects of the proposed banner, participants came to agreement on a series of custom-designed banners with the CUF logo based on the 7 principles. Also proposed was a Working Group that would take up the design, funding, and production of the banners. This was the proposal taken to the All Congregation Meeting, and I was very disappointed that folks who were not part of the Congregational Conversation responded negatively to the planned banners. I hope that the Working Group will be able to meet the overall goal of making CUF’s existence and identity visible within months, rather than years.

- Led Membership Committee meeting brainstorming about New Member classes and Newcomer Orientation sessions – there were many good ideas floated, and a few committee members are developing an online document with embedded videos that could be used for the latter. Connie Payne, RE Coordinator also attended, and suggested having a New Member Potluck for RE Parents – we need to set a date soon.

- Met with CUF member to discuss social justice initiatives.

- Met with Pathway to Renewal team; because RSVPs were lower than last year, only 2 facilitators were needed, so I did not participate this year.

- Attended “High School Journeys” Sunday Service.

- Attended CUF Valentines Trivia Night – it was great to see so many non-CUF folks taking part and having fun.

- Attended the Stewardship Orientation and BBQ.

- Switched the 20 Minute Intro to CUF & UU to first Sundays. Unfortunately, no one attended – will discuss alternatives at upcoming Membership meeting.
• Held a 1:1 meeting with BOT member.

**Personal Growth:** exercise, Choral Union, practicing mandolin.

**Professional Growth:** met with Spiritual Director, Family Systems Coach, mentor, minister peer group, Bi-State UU Ministers.

**Teaching:** Prepped and led the first three Building Your Own Theology sessions. I’m very pleased with the high level of commitment from the eight class participants, shown by good attendance, preparation, and depth of discussion. Although we’re only one third of the way through, we have built strong rapport and connections among the class.

**Denominational Activities:** Bi-State UU Ministers monthly meeting via internet. Introduced The Promise and Practice of Our Faith campaign for BLUU as described in Worship section. [That Sunday’s collection is over 25% of what our pledge would be ($10/member) should members decide to make a match-eligible pledge at the May Congregational Meeting.]

**Prophetic Outreach:**
- Attended Racial Justice Coalition meeting.
- Participated in (1st Annual?) CUF Hearts Potluck, a wonderful outreach/communion with leaders and members of Carbondale’s Moslem communities. Kudos to the many people who helped in many ways in making it a successful event.
- On 2/14, travelled to Springfield with CUF members Jan Eisenhard and Rev. Bill Sasso to take part in the Responsible Budget Coalition’s rally. Other clergy members and I met with the Governor’s aide to inform him about the moral implications of the budget. After the Governor’s address, a group of Carbondale-area folks met with Rep. Terri Bryant.
- Attended Ralph Anderson Interfaith Dialogue planning meeting, and took part in developing the next two RAID discussions: April 15: “Welcoming the Stranger” in collaboration with Southern Illinois Immigrant Rights Project, and June 3: “Coming Out in Faith” (to be hosted by CUF) in collaboration with Rainbow Café and in conjunction with Pride Weekend. [From that discussion, I invited Rev. Kim Magwire to share the pulpit with me for the Pride Service that morning, and to bring the Church of the Good Shepherd congregation. She accepted the invitation – I’m very excited!]
- Attended Carbondale Interfaith Council meeting, reported for the RAID planning committee.