Minister's Report  Rev. Sarah C. Richards  June 2018
Reporting period 5/2/18 – 6/11/18

Congregational Retreat, end of the church year special services, and the first annual SI Pride Weekend were highlights during this reporting period.

Worship: Planned and delivered the fourth “experiment in spaciousness” service of the year, “Creativity for All,” with Facilitator Kathy O'Laughlin. These services have received very positive feedback, and I intend to keep experimenting with them in the future. Conceived and organized a Sunday Service, “CUF Creative Vision” that brought the congregational retreat experience of refining the vision and mission statements to a larger audience. The service incorporated reflections from three retreat participants, and helped to inform folks ahead of the Congregational Meeting, where the vision and mission statements were approved by a wide margin. Graduation Sunday was altered a bit in content – replacing the usual parents of 8th graders’ reflections with a special RE teacher appreciation ceremony – but had the same emotional effect as in the past. Our graduating high school youth are inspiring! This year, I added information about getting to Young Adult meetings at the UU congregations nearest to where our graduates will live in the fall. The Pride Sunday Service was a highpoint of the year for me, as we welcomed the Church of the Good Shepherd congregation, choir, and minister for my first-ever joint congregation service. We have plans to do it again next year, either at CUF or COGS. Last Sunday was our annual Flower Communion service, which also incorporates leader and volunteer appreciation. It is a bit disappointing that so many folks that deserve that recognition were not in attendance (the Membership Committee and I may need to re-think when to do the appreciation ceremony, but it was a beautiful service as always.

Set hymns (communicated with Music Coordinators accompanists), selected readings, crafted Orders of Service drafts, Service scripts, and slides for all services that I led. Led planning meeting for 6/17 Building Your Own Theology-based service.

Rites of passage: conferred with family members planning a memorial service for a non-member.

Counseling and Pastoral Care: Made pastoral visits, calls, emails and notes. Met with Pastoral Friends to review pastoral updates and activities, I briefly presented resources from Hospice Fndn of America’s Transforming Loss: Finding Potential for Growth Program at JALC. Bob Camp led the CE portion on pastoral care of people in hospice.

Practical Arts/Administration:
- Wrote and posted monthly Minister's Report.
- Met with BOT President weekly.
- Attended BOT meeting.
- Met with RE Coordinator and/or RE Coordinator Assistant weekly, making preparations for staff transition.
- Communicated with Choir director as needed.
- Met with Office Administrator weekly. Edited the weekly Bulletins.
- Attended Sunday Services meeting, fleshed out Summer Services. Drafted 2018-19 Sunday Service calendar.
- Attended Membership Meeting, discussed new member orientation plan
- Met with Committee on Shared Ministry to discuss MFC evaluations. Submitted self-evaluation.
- Wrote Minister’s Column, Service Descriptions for June CUF Links.

**Organizational Ministry:**

- Participated in our third annual Congregational Retreat at Touch of Nature. We had beautiful weather for walking and eating outdoors. Indoors, we had very productive sessions refining proposed Vision and Mission Statements, and discussing goals for the strategic plan. I led the opening introduction and the brief closing ritual, and tried to observe and listen more than contribute to the discussions.
- Attended Congregational Meeting.
- Attended Charlson-Lant anniversary potluck and re-connected with our long-distance members.
- Participated in Strategic Planning process meeting
- Led New Member Orientation planning meeting, devised abbreviated “one-off” session.
- Led RE Planning Circle with RE Coordinator Assistant and RE Teachers – productive and informative session. I’d like to make this an annual appreciation/debriefing session.
- Led 2 hour New Member Orientation with three participants (2 that were expected had to cancel). Because of the limited time and great amount of information given, I asked the participants to read the Prospective Member packets, and take their time to decide about membership. I intend to follow up with them in 2 weeks. This is another issue to review in Membership meeting.
- Facilitated the May and June Facilitators’ Covenant Group meetings. We will reconvene in August to plan for recruitment and PR for next years’ groups.
- Checked in with the middle school youth as they built their Cardboard City. Our kids are awesome.

**Personal Growth:** exercise, daily poetry reading, practicing mandolin.

**Professional Growth:** met with Spiritual Director, Family Systems Coach, mentor, minister peer group, Bi-State UU Ministers. Maintained Friday as Sabbath Day, except for Friday of Pride Weekend.
Students: See New Member Orientation above.

Denominational Activities: Bi-State UU Ministers monthly meeting via internet, welcomed Mt. Vernon UU Fellowship members to 5/6 Sunday Service, and met with them for more than an hour after the service.

Prophetic Outreach:

- Attended final Carbondale Interfaith Council meeting before summer hiatus; reported on upcoming Ralph Anderson Interfaith Dialogue, “Coming Out in Faith.”
- Attended Combined Meeting of the Community Solar Working Group and Downstate Caucus of the IL Climate Table hosted by First Christian Church. Participated in IL Clean Jobs Coalition’s “Listen, Lead & Share” Campaign presentation.
- With Feed My Sheep team: helped pack lunches, drove and delivered them to housebound folks.
- Gave interviews for two different TV stations about the faith communities’ involvement in SI Pride Week, but neither was aired.
- Made cookies for, and attended first hour of SI Pride Weekend Opening Reception (co-hosted with First Christian Church and Church of the Good Shepherd)
- Led enthusiastic group of CUF folks on the Pride Walk, attended Pride Fest and helped to “person” the CUF table.
- With LGBTQ Welcoming Congregation Committee, decorated the sanctuary for Pride Sunday, led Pride Sunday Service (described above).
- Acted as MC for the RAID Coming Out in Faith, hosted at CUF.

Many thanks to all those CUF folks who helped out in all of the SI Pride Weekend activities – it was gratifying that so many were involved, we really lived our UU principles out in the community.

- Attended Racial Justice Coalition meeting