Minister’s Board Report

February 2021

Greetings!

Here we are—a month away from the one-year marker of our last Sunday service together in person. In honor of this moment, in March I am putting together a worship service that will include over twenty different voices of other UU ministers reflecting on this time. It is my—and UUCF’s—gift to the larger UU community. As of this upcoming Sunday, we are inviting congregants into the Zoom room for Sunday worship as well. It will still be streamed on facebook for those who prefer it that way, but those who want something more interactive will have the option of being on camera in the Zoom room for Joys & Sorrows, the Welcome, etc.

Thanks to the efforts of you and our office administrator, UUCF’s possessions are now at First Christian. We have a long way to go before we are “up and running,” but it looks like the pandemic will give us time to do so. Many thanks to Linda Duarte-Wolf for letting us store our stuff with her for so long; there aren’t enough words of gratitude. And for Mark Umbriaco for his leadership (and heavy lifting!) on these moves. Much gratitude to both of you and all the helpers who made this seemingly impossible task happen.

I’m expanding UUCF’s pastoral reach with a new monthly Depression & Anxiety Group. It is not therapy, of course, but will simply provide a supportive space for people to share their experiences with these challenges, which most of us have faced in one way or another, especially in this past year. It’s part of a plan to insure our healthiness as a congregation as we move closer to being together in person. I’m also doing an online New to UU in a few weeks for newcomers or those who want to refresh their membership.

This is the time of year where we need to begin thinking in earnest about budgeting and the pledge drive. While pledges will renew automatically this year, a robust stewardship campaign would be welcome. We have all braced ourselves for a financial “slump” this year, and, while it will hopefully be offset by our pared-down expenses, we don’t want to be too complacent in moving forward. I suspect there are some members of our community who are able to and would like to contribute at this time, if only they were asked in a meaningful way.

I appreciate those who stepped up in their leadership roles while I was gone in January, thus completing my postponed study month from last summer. Just a reminder that I still have several months of a sabbatical coming up (one month accrues for each year I’ve been at UUCF). I am considering dividing the sabbatical in half and at least doing the first portion while we still remain online.

Finally, let me acknowledge that after all these months of adjusting to the pandemic, the political circus, and, most recently, the insurrection—the adrenaline most of us have been living on has left our systems. If you are feeling a “slump” in engagement either personally or on a community level, I’m told that this is quite widespread at the moment. We have all just stepped (mostly) off a roller coaster, and figuring out how to move forward—or having the motivation to do so—is tough for many right now.

With that being said, please keep taking care of yourselves. I’ve been awed by how little anxiousness (in an extremely anxious time) that this Board has allowed to creep into its work. I think that says a lot about how all of you—even as you’ve faced communal and individual obstacles this past year—are centered, compassionate people who have the best interests of this congregation at heart. Please take a moment and hear what I’ve just said; it deserves you giving yourselves a little applause.

In deep appreciation,

Rev. Jason Cook