January Minister’s Board Report

Greetings, Board!

I’ll keep this short as I am away in Oregon for doctoral class on leadership. I know you have quite a few things to talk about at this month’s meeting.

As we begin this new year, it’s important to still keep our eyes on the bigger picture. North Orange County is still a place very much in need of a liberal religious community like ours. Even though we have not been trying to grow (instead, the focus has been on sustaining what we already have in the midst of the challenging circumstance of the Temple setting), we nonetheless had ten people sign our membership book in the last month. For most congregations in the United States, this would be a significant “win.” Yet, we know when we were intentionally doing outreach, the number of visitors and new members was much higher. I still see the potential in what we have; potential that will not be reached in our current setting.

As you know, this has been a difficult time with the Temple proceeding with plans with little or no communication directed our way. The meetings we have had with their leadership suggest no malice in these actions; they are simply poor at communicating. The result is that we have been left scrambling to problem-solve at the last minute. My biggest concern is that our lease as written is no longer being honored, and we don’t have anything to replaceit in writing yet. I would suggest that the Board make getting a revised lease a priority.

Along with that, creative ideas about where we might move to are still very welcome. Meetings with UU of Anaheim have been good ones, but I’m afraid their timeline for decision-making is going to take years.

The other big event coming up is our pledge drive. I’m hoping at your meeting tonight that we have confirmation of a leader for this!

Thanks for everything you do! I will say that most of my classmates are part of “dying” churches (because that is the norm these days), while a few of us have different problems on our hands. One classmate even has had explosive growth (he’s in Palm Springs with an inclusive—atheists welcome!--church that even used to rent from the UU Church there before his congregation got too big). I’m picking his brain!

In gratitude,

Rev. Jason Cook