

October 17, 2010

Congregational Meeting, UU Society of Sacramento

Ministry Report to the Members by Roger Jones, Consulting Minister

Child/Youth R. E. enrollment: **82** as of 10/3/10. Nursery and Story Time: 19; Spirit Play (grades 1-5): 34; Junior High Youth Group: 15. Senior High Youth Group: 14. Coming of Age: a voluntary extra program for youth in grades 8-10, each paired with a mentor. Youth attend three weekend retreats organized by the Pacific Central District (PCD) & monthly meetings here with mentors and two coordinators (R.J. and Taylor Lewis). 4 youth from UUSS, total 60 in PCD. UUSS hosts senior high youth conference next weekend and middle school conference in November.

Adult Enrichment: Committee started in spring, is responding to Interest Survey completed in 2010 by over 100 people. New groups, classes, programs starting all the time. We are making good use of our facilities and our talented members. As Family Minister I oversee this program area; Carole provides strong support.

Newcomer Orientation Course: Lasts 5 ½ hours, offered 3-4 times a year. Purpose: help newcomers to feel known by us, get to know us better and know how to take advantage of what UUSS has to offer, get to know other newcomers, learn UU heritage & identity, learn ways to connect and serve, the meaning of membership and financial stewardship.

In these times, larger congregations do have a constant flow of comings and goings of members, visitors. Yet we do not want to repel visitors or fail to help new members find their way to a sense of belonging and commitment.

Staffing Changes: *Head Custodian* Elaine on long term recovery from surgery for shoulder injury. Other staff is pitching in, with volunteer help. *Member Connections Facilitator* a 3-year pilot project in 2nd year now: last year staffed by a seminarian who had other duties here to create a full-time internship. In July the internship ended and Board hired Carole to do this ½ time job.

Music staff search: Hired pianist Rachel for this church year as accompanist. No music director was hired before Doug's sabbatical, so we recruited Eric, lifelong UU, to be interim coordinator of our special music. Choir keeps warmed up weekly with volunteer Meg.

R eligious Ed.: Miranda promoted to R. E. Assistant last spring from child care room. Current child care staff: Stephanie & Susan, both hired in last 6 months, and occasional substitute assistants senior high and older. Miranda supervises and schedules them, and I oversee all 3 staffers.

Ministry needs and trends: I am here on a consulting ministry contract, starting my 3rd year. This is the 8th year for a full-time second minister position. I oversee a few program areas, I work with Doug in most others, and I have minimal involvement in a few areas. I do pastoral care as available and called upon. I lead worship less often than the Lead Minister. For a church our size, my position is typically called a Program Minister. It is often a hired position and not called. Doug's role is that of a Lead or Senior Minister, a called position. You have completed 10 years of ministry with him as your Lead Minister. The needs for his role are changing and the areas of his focus and impact have been changing. This is typical of churches of our scale of operation, and it is necessary if we are to achieve our potential in program excellence and opportunities for

involvement. It's necessary if we are to reach a sustainable level of program vitality, gain a higher profile and have a stronger moral voice in the community.

In his early years with UUSS, Doug initiated a lot of new programs for lay involvement and enrichment. Now he cannot be as visible in day to day activities as the Program Minister is. A Lead Minister must now have the major role of being a leader, not only a pastor. What does this mean? Examples of such work: Casting the vision for our future, supporting our long range plans and reaching our 5-year goals. This includes more work with UU Master Planning Facilitators and support of a future capital campaign for expansions and renovations of our facilities. He will need to work on inspiring greater generosity, and attending to major giving programs.

The Lead Minister works on developing new lay leaders and supporting the growth of those we have (e.g., Spiritually Grounded Leadership), and works closely with a Board of Trustees. The Lead Minister must keep attention focused on the health of the congregation as a whole system, not just tinkering with parts of it. He has to see the big picture, and articulate what it looks like. Doug hopes to have a profile in the larger community as our Lead Minister.

In addition, he will need to give time and assume greater responsibility as the Chief of Staff, whether he likes it or not. This role includes recruiting, supporting, coaching and directing other staff leaders. The purpose? So that we all work as a team in serving the congregation's leaders and committees, to assure clarity of accountability and clarity of purpose with regard to goals.

At the same time, at our mid-size category (known as a program-size church), it's not really possible for us to "manage" all the elements of UUSS life. A program-style church is not big enough to be a well-oiled machine or a streamlined ship, but it's too big to have a solo minister who is everything to everyone. This is not unique to UUSS; it's borne out by congregational consulting organizations that serve a variety of faiths and by our own UU denominational experts.

As you grow more, you can expect additional specialized staff or ministry positions, though some of those may be volunteer positions and some new staff may be part time. Examples from other UU churches: areas like membership support, adult programs, pastoral care, social justice programs, expanded music programs, campus ministry.

Any leader's role is to get out of the day-to-day details, climb up to the balcony and get a broad view of the organization, and articulate that view to us, and remind us of our plans and visions for the future. In a congregation, this role is a crucial one for the Lead Minister. Again, this role means Doug's highest and most useful leverage is not in being seen everywhere all the time, but in focusing his time and attention toward pursuit of our vision and goals.

It has been a joy not only serving you all and working with our volunteers, but also working with my staff colleagues and with Doug as Lead Minister. It is good to see that a minister can continue to grow and change—in his 60s—and can sustain a high level of energy and focus. Of course, you and he have grown together, and helped one another grow and thrive. The recent party to celebrate your 10th anniversary with Doug was a high point of the year, and better attended than most congregational business meetings. And his book of sermons is a cash cow. I know I speak for Doug as well as myself when I say: Thank you for all the ways you make this a wonderful congregation in which to serve. The future is bright, and the present is a blessing.