

Senior Staff Report to the Board of Trustees Of Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church

December 7, 2017

In this report:

- Director of Lifespan Religious Education's Report – Tim Atkins
- Assistant Minister's Report – Katie Romano Griffin
- Executive Director's Report – Sara Deshler
- Senior Minister's Report – Rev. Abhi Janamanchi

Director of Lifespan Religious Education's Report:

Howdy Board!

I want to start off my Board Report by lifting up the incredible work of Jean Bergey and all the volunteers that made Holiday Craft day possible! What a fun, truly multigenerational event! Around 275 children and adults registered for Holiday Craft Day, and doesn't include all the volunteers there making this tradition happen.

Childcare – I'm happy to report that our new Nursery Attendant, Irene Ravitz, is getting rave reviews from parents, and I've heard from multiple parents of nursery aged children they are very happy that we hired a professional nursery attendant to be there for both services. I still need to think through the first service a bit more – my initial hope was for us to move away from paid youth assistants in the nursery during the first service. However, we're seeing regular attendance of 6-8 kids in the nursery during the first service. That implies at least one other paid person is needed in addition to Irene, yet the attendance numbers at the second service don't warrant someone saying for both services.

Youth Program – Although you are already aware of this by now, I am happy to announce that we've hired Tiffany Lewis to be our Youth Coordinator. Tiffany is not a UU but clearly identifies with our values, and has the right attitude and personality for UU Youth Work. I've spend time this month getting Tiffany acquainted with Cedar Lane – I know from personal experience Cedar Lane can be a bit overwhelming right at the beginning, and I'm trying to be intentional to make sure we don't overwhelm Tiffany too much right at the beginning. She's been making connections with youth and volunteers and I have great hopes that she will not only continue the increased energy we see in our youth groups, but take them to a new level.

Teacher Trust – I'm starting to see some of the positive results from this focus early on in my tenure here at Cedar Lane. For example, I needed to do a change to the RE calendars, and instead of it being a big ordeal, most of the teachers agreed with me that it would be a good change. This might not seem a huge deal, but it's one of those subtle indications that trust is being restored.

Adult RE – This honestly has had to take a back seat while I focused on staffing up youth coordinator and nursery and getting them plugged in to our system. Our new

plan is to launch a few soul matters sharing circles in January, and I hope to get us on the path toward a more robust Adult RE program soon!

Forum – The first Evening Forum of the year took place November 12. We had attendance of around 50 folks. Although I was of course hoping for more, many of the people who had expressed dismay over the weekly forum collapsing were in attendance. Since that evening forum, we have not heard the same level of grumblings over the Forum. We do have a couple of people who have expressed a possible interest in organizing the Forum – we’ll look at getting them together in the new year to start brainstorming.

Governance – I continue to help Abhi and the rest of senior staff on the governance side of life. I wrote a first draft of all the operational interpretations for Sections 1 and 2 of the Vision 2020 objectives, which we will edit as a team and present to the Board in time for the Board retreat. Next up on the Governance side will be crafting how those interpretations could be measured, policies around child care, and assisting Sara in the effort toward a revamped Congregational Safety Policy.

Worship – I’m adding in a new section on Worship to my Board reports :-)) I took a larger role in Worship services in November, which will continue forward to December. My first Time for All Ages seemed to go pretty well, and my hope is that we move towards having Time for All Ages almost every week as opposed to having Chapels almost every week. It’s important to do more of this family, all ages together worship, so our children learn what being an adult Unitarian Universalist is like! I also co-led the Teach In on White Supremacy service with Abhi on November 12th – my homily and the actual teach in portion that I took the lead in organizing seemed to go pretty well, and folks are still talking about characteristics of white supremacy in institution even a month later!

With Loving Faith,
Tim Atkins, Director of Lifespan Religious Education

Assistant Minister’s Report:

A large piece of my work this month involved doing a deep dive into the organizational structure and systems at Cedar Lane. As the Capital Campaign approaches it is more important than ever that our staff workflow is streamlined in a way that maximizes efficiency and customer (member) service satisfaction. A healthy, efficient staff will stay in their positions longer and provide the quality service that helps members and visitors feel supported, appreciated and valued.

As part of my work, I read the Staffing Report, which was completed by our CERG Staff in 2015 and engaged a volunteer, Resha Anderson, to lead the staff in a workflow analysis exercise on November 21st. This work was done at the request of the Senior Minister and the Staff who have expressed a need for organizational, role, and workflow clarity. The Nov. 21st meeting was well attended by staff, Gail Riley, a co-organizer, and three HR Committee members also attended to observe and provide support. A comprehensive Workflow Analysis report will be presented to

the Senior Staff in early December. The initial notes from the meeting are as follows:

Notes

- Office Manager/Accounting Position is the most cohesive and organized.
- We have a ton of meetings that impact our time negatively. (See Action)
- It's clear that multiple people do similar duties.
- We have some inefficiencies in the area of Database entry, report retrieval, etc.
- We do not have a dedicated program team/meeting/process.
- About 17 hours a week are spent putting out fires.
- We are using multiple databases, which wastes time and creates a staff burden.
- We have redundancies and inefficiencies in scheduling, registration and events. (See Action)
- The Pathway to Membership is not clearly advertised and it is not clear in how we handle it in terms of database management.
- Tech support is a weak area for us.
- Stewardship/Capital Campaign support was not proportionally addressed in our tasks (See Action)

Actions

- All Staff: consider this question: What do we bring to meetings and what do we hope to take from them? Do we always need to meet in person is there a better way to use our time?
- Database Administrator and Membership Coordinator: Set up ACS so that we can reduce the number of databases that we use. Consider a database that also has email capability so that we can also eliminate constant contact.
- Executive Director: Create an information security policy recommendation and set of standard operating procedures for the organization.
- Ministry Team: Consider having one meeting per month solely focused on making program/programming decisions. Note: This does not mean rehashing things already coming/happening but actually planning the spiritual direction for the congregation and aligning all programming with the mission/vision.
- Membership Ministry Team/Membership Coordinator/Assistant Minister/Director of Communications: Map the new member experience. Clarify and publish membership pathway and pathways to congregational engagement.
- Assistant Minister/RE Admin/Director of Communications: Clarify and map Registration/Scheduling/Event processes.
- Executive Director: Determine who owns tech support and what needs to be done to correct some of the technical problems with our network.

- Executive Director: Clarify, implement and oversee team hours to support stewardship and the capital campaign.
- Assistant Minister/Senior Minister: Create a final report of findings, understandings and recommendations for the Board of Trustees, Senior Staff and Staff.

Recommended Timeline

1. The Ministry Team will present the Senior Staff with a completed Workflow Analysis report, recommendations and organizational chart by December 15th, 2017.
2. Senior Staff will give feedback and a final report will be presented to the staff before the end of the 2017 calendar year for a roll out in January 2018.
3. The Executive Director will create, implement and supervise the implementation of the recommendations from the Workflow Analysis report and the Senior Staff reviewed report by January 1, 2018.

Study Leave Report

I returned to the office on my first two days of study leave and worked from home for much of the rest my time. The time I was able to take for reading, reflection and planning was incredibly valuable. I will recoup the missed study leave days. My next study leave will begin January 22nd and end January 29th, with me returning on the 30th.

Pastoral Care:

Much of my work this month continues in pastoral care. I am continuing to provide reassurance, making off-site visits in addition to the many one-to-one meetings that I am having with congregants in need of pastoral care. In addition to many in-office visits, I made a couple of pastoral visits on Thanksgiving to a few of our senior members who I suspected might be alone for the holiday. The visits were well received. It is a joy and a gift to be able to do this work of moving with people through all phases and stages of their life.

The Ministry Team has been emphasizing the availability of Pastoral Visitors before and after services through the month of November and Pastoral Visitors are reporting an uptick in members reaching out for pastoral care. This is a very positive and encouraging response. The Ministry/Pastoral teams will continue to offer/emphasize the availability of Pastoral Visitors before and after services. As the holidays approach and the Capital Campaign silent phase begins, it is expected that free flowing anxiety will increase in the congregational system. The increased visibility of the caring ministries will help create more resiliencies in the congregational system while decreasing the anxiety level.

Norman Allen, Intern Minister, will co-facilitate a “Parents Weathering the Storm” group for parents who are raising children who have mental illness, which

will launch in January. Norman will be working with our DLRE to reach out to parents to market this group.

The Aging Support Group has decided to decrease its meetings to once a month. The Pastoral Visitors Team has decided to reframe how the Support Groups for Care Givers and for people with Long-Term Chronic Illness are managed. A new program will launch in February after services.

Pastoral Visitors are currently not required to have background checks, which is not in alignment with best practices. Our Safe Congregations policy does not address this issue but it should. Anyone who works with vulnerable populations needs to be background checked. I have made this recommendation to our Executive Director and Senior Staff is currently in the discussion phase on our Safe Congregations policy changes that need to be made/recommended.

I expect that my one-to-one pastoral visits will increase over the next couple of months between the holidays, the Capital Campaign and the changing format of Support Groups. I am prepared to absorb this into my workload as Pastoral Care is my primary function.

Lastly, Sara Davidson and I have been in deep conversation about the challenges of launching pastoral programs at Cedar Lane. So much is going on that messages/events/programs are often not visible enough, which results in poor turnout. We agree that this is a multi-focal problem in our complex system. We are beginning the process of unwinding this cluster of concerns in tandem with launching the Workflow Analysis report.

Rites of passage and special services:

I collaborated with the ministry team to create the All Souls Service this November. The addition of an altar for our lost loved ones was well received.

Spiritual Development:

“Soul Matters” Meditations are continuing. Rev. Janamanchi has created the November and December Meditations. I will be responsible for January. The members who are using the meditations are reporting that they find them incredibly valuable.

Soul Matters packets were distributed on schedule to all ministry team leaders with the invitation to use the Chalice Lightings, Readings and Questions from the packet at all meetings that occur at Cedar Lane. This level of engagement with the themes will help us all to become more aligned in our search for truth and meaning. This practice will also help provide a similar spiritual framework for meetings that sometimes might lack one. The new website will have soon have a special page where all members will be able to locate each month’s packet. Our hope is that all Cedar Laners will begin to engage at some level with the themes at worship, at meetings and throughout the week.

DLRE Tim Atkins, Rev. Abhi and I are in continued conversation about additional adult religious education programming and will timeline things out in a sustainable way in the later winter.

Worship:

Rev. Abhi and I collaborated with the rest of the Worship Team on this month's services. Participated in a 2-hour mini-retreat with the Cedar Lane and River Road Worship Teams to discuss Multi-Cultural Worship.

Membership:

The Membership Ministry Team decided to change the times at which we offer UU 101 and the New Member Orientation. We will not alternate months, with each course happening only once every other month after the second service. The general feeling is that this will enable us to focus more on the classes and to have them feel less rushed. The next New Member Recognition will be December 10th. We expect to have between 8 and 10 participants. Sara Davidson and I had an amazing meeting about marketing and clarifying the way we present information to educate current and prospective members about our Mission and Vision while also providing more clear pathways to engagement. Senior Staff is reviewing these recommendations.

I have yet to get my hands on accurate and complete membership data. Our membership coordinator has been keeping a second database because he did not have administrative access to ACS to create reports, which has now been rectified. This situation is an ongoing problem that the Membership Coordinator and Database Administrator are working on. RE and Membership are coordinating New Member information much better now that we have a system in place.

The Volunteer Fair remains on hold. Carolyn Morrissey, our Volunteer Coordinator, will play an important role in the fair and she is currently helping out with accounting in the office. When her role in the office wanes, we will reschedule the fair.

Social Justice:

- This month I attended the Transgender Day of Remembrance in Rockville.
- I am also reviewing a proposal from AIM regarding the Social Justice trainings they offer.

Professional Development:

I met with 2 of my professional advisors as well as my mentor and Spiritual Director this month and met with a smaller group of ministers as well. I am also meeting regularly with Rev. Abhi and with my Transition Team.

Completed work:

- I wrote and submitted an article for the International UU Latinx monthly online publication. The article was accepted and will be published next month.
- I am continuing my work with other Latinx colleagues on a bilingual service for GA in 2018.
- Read an article by the Alban Institute on the First Year of Ministry.
- A Video series on De-Centering Whiteness in UU Worship

Work in process:

- Renewing my Mental Health First Aid Certification
- Renewing my AED/CPR/First Aid Certifications

Executive Director's Report:

Staffing Update: Finally! we are now at full staff. Youth Coordinator Tiffany Lewis joined us in November. Carolyn Morrissey has been invaluable helping with training Jen Morley, our new Accounting and Office Manager. Carolyn will be finishing up in that role this week, we are eager for her to return to her Volunteer Coordinator duties.

FY 2018 Stewardship Update: As of today we have 447 pledges from 689 people for a total of \$907,072. This is an increase from last month. The average pledge is \$2,029, last year at this time we had 17 more pledges in but for \$28,293 less pledged, with a lower average pledge, \$1,894.

Account Statements: We will be sending out an invitation by email to invite pledgers to view their statements in ACS this week, then send paper statements next week.

End of the Year Request: We will be sending out a request this week for end of year contributions to the operating budget.

Membership: We certified our membership as of February 1 at **708** members. We are now at **745** members. We had 2 new members join, Cecelia Williams and Parker Hsu. No one passed or moved. We are working on the membership scrub process in readiness to certify our membership in the new year.

Member Memorials: In November we had memorial services for Cal Baldwin and Jan Eisner. An upcoming service is planned for Ann Bechill that Norm Allen will lead. Lyn Peters and Vicky Strella are taking over as Memorial Service Coordinators this month, we are still working out the details.

Security Planning Team: The team of church members is meeting this week to work on the security plan that will include our emergency response to disasters, fire, active shooters, large events, etc. The team has been set up as a steering group

that will be reaching out to staff and members with responsibilities in each affected area to help draft those parts of the plan. We are also working on implementing the changes to our physical security funded with the matching grant from the County. Mary Means has been working on an emergency response plan based on the Nursery Schools plan, it is only a draft but if you want to take a peek go to https://docs.google.com/document/d/1sPW6VSwEauDOdETxEpqsBKycnZGY_u67xnnhX4U1eRA/edit?usp=sharing

The Operational and Financial Procedures Handbook is progressing, Katie and Tim have been invaluable in working through changes. The Financial Policy Committee is reviewing the policies that fall under their responsibilities.

Composting: We had been offered the opportunity to host a community composting system, that has fallen through but we are meeting this week to revisit whether we will take this on and if so, where the compost bins would be located.

Chart of Accounts change: We have been working on adapting the budget and other reports to the new chart of accounts structure, an ongoing process. The bottom line remains the same, just what goes where in the budget has been reworked. We now can get more detail from our reports, but we have to design each one anew. There were several accounts that were lumped together on the balance sheet as part of the transfer to the new chart of accounts, Regina Dull, Carolyn and I have been working to resolve how they should be handled.

December 5 2017 Data					
Members					
Certified 2/1/17	708				
12/5/2017	745				
Pledges:	12/5/2017	12/5/2016			
Pledge target	\$925,000	\$936,000			
Pledged	\$907,072	\$889,889			
received	\$416,345	\$474,481			
% recd ytd	44.50%	53.30%			
Pledges	447	469			
mean	\$2,029	\$1,886			

Total Income:	12/5/17	12/5/2016			
Budgeted	\$1,243,300	\$1,156,000			
Received	\$580,594	\$491,848			
% recd	46.70%	42.50%			
	Total pledge	Plate and gifts	F/R Programs	Rentals	Program fees
Budgeted	\$925,000	\$92,000	\$50,000	\$103,000	\$63,300
Received	\$416,345	\$25,025	\$45,000	\$52,546	\$22,522
% received	45.01%	27.20%	90.00%	51.02%	36%
% of income budget	74.40%	7.40%	4.00%	8.30%	5.10%

Respectfully submitted, Sara Deshler

Senior Minister's Report:

Worship:

The winter holidays are a special season at Cedar Lane. We celebrate both the value of the long dark of winter and the return of the light as the earth begins its turn toward spring. Once again, this holiday season, we are offering a contemplative Advent Vespers service on Wednesdays (Dec. 6, 13, 20), a Spirit Experience on Saturday, December 16th @ 7 PM, our traditional Solstice Service on Dec. 17 at 5 PM, a lessons and carols service on Christmas eve morning @ 10 AM, and, of course, three services on Christmas Eve at 4, 6, & 10 PM. A Christmas Pageant will be the center-piece of the 4 PM Christmas Eve family service. There will be one service at 10 AM on New Year's eve.

Worship attendance and collection plate information for November is included below:

Date	Celebrant	Worship Attendance	Collection & Share The Plate
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Nov. 5	Katie	238 (105 + 133)	\$1047.00
Nov. 12	Abhi & Tim	259 (124 + 135)	\$902.23 (\$902.23 – Family Diversity Projects)
Nov. 19	Gini Von Courter & Abhi	263 (109 + 154)	\$2836 – Puerto Rico Relief
Nov. 26	Norman & Border Trip participants	224 (109 + 115)	\$697.82

The Spirit Experience – I am very pleased to report that the UU Funding Panel awarded \$9000 (\$3000 more than last year) to support the Spirit Experience. In addition, they also gave a \$2000 challenge grant. This funding provides us the necessary resources to organize upcoming Spirit Experiences.

Adult Education: Kiplinger Lecture - I have been working with the Kiplinger Team to find a speaker for the annual lecture. I am happy to report that Frances Moore Lappe has agreed to be our 2017-18 Kiplinger Lecturer! Frances Moore Lappé is a democracy advocate and world food and hunger expert who has authored or co-authored 19 books, including the three-million copy *Diet for a Small Planet*. Her most recent work, released by Beacon Press in September 2017, is *Daring Democracy: Igniting Power, Meaning, and Connection for the America We Want*. The lecture is scheduled for Sunday, March 11 at 7 PM.

Social Justice – The Social Justice Ministry team had its annual retreat on Nov. 18th with Gini Von Courter. The team spent time clarifying roles & responsibilities and figuring out ways to focus our social justice efforts through capacity building, recruitment, and training of leaders. It was a very productive meeting. I am grateful to Gini for helping develop the agenda and facilitating the meeting.

Memorial Services – Led three memorial services in November for CL members Bill Wallenmeyer (Nov. 5), Cal Baldwin (Nov. 12), and CL friend, Jan Eisner (Nov. 26).

Public Witness & Community Involvement – I offered a prayer at an Interfaith Transgender Day of Remembrance Service at UCC Seneca Valley in Germantown (Nov. 20); Co-led a workshop on sacred texts & liturgical resources at the Interfaith Symposium on Climate Change (Dec.3), the press conference and program to launch the Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival (Dec. 4), Poor People’s Campaign Training (Dec. 5), and a rally in support of a clean DREAM Act at the Capitol (Dec. 6);

Poor People’s Campaign – A National Call For Moral Revival – On Monday, Dec. 4, I joined UUA President Susan Frederick Gray and other interfaith at Capitol Hill for the launch of the new Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival. Led by the Rev. Dr. William Barber, the campaign seeks to unite tens of thousands of

people across the country to challenge the evils of systemic racism, poverty, the war economy, ecological devastation, and the nation's distorted morality. The Campaign is expected to be a multi-year effort that will begin on Mother's Day with six weeks of direct action and civil disobedience across at least 25 states and DC, leading up to a mass mobilization at the US Capitol on June 21. Starting in January, I will be working with a core team to organize and mobilize people in the DMV region. The campaign is co-organized by Repairers of the Breach; the Kairos Center for Religions, Rights and Social Justice at the Union Theological Seminary; and scores of local and national grassroots groups across the country.

"We must transform the moral narrative in this country," Rev. Barber said Monday. "We went through the most expensive presidential campaign in U.S. history in 2016 without a single serious discussion of poverty and systemic racism. Now, we are witnessing an emboldened attack on the poor and an exacerbation of systemic racism that demands a response. This is not about saving any one party or policy agenda, but about saving the soul of America."

Vacation & Study Leave – I am planning to take a few days of study leave (Dec. 27-Dec. 29) after the holidays.

I am also planning a two-week trip to India in late January to visit the Khasi Hills in my role as the UUA's Ambassador to the Unitarian Union of Northeast India and my family in Southern India.

Senior Minister's Log:

- Prepared and presented worship on Nov. 12, Dec. 3; served as worship leader on Nov. 19;
- Prepared and led 3 memorial services;
- Attended and co-facilitated the Social Justice Ministry Team retreat;
- Met with the Rev. Dr. Mark Morrison Reed by phone to develop the agenda for Seminary for a Day (March 24, 2018);
- Submitted column and worship information for Dec. newsletter;
- Prepared and recorded a video meditation on Hope;
- Met with – Katie Romano Griffin (weekly), Tim Atkins (3x), Sara Deshler (weekly), Henry Sgrecci (2x), Jim Anderson & Gail Riley (3x), Ariel Mora (Mosaic Makers), Moyo Myers Ellis & Sandy Shaw (Social Justice), Christiane Graham (environmental justice), Norman Allen, , to discuss congregational programs and issues;
- Made two hospital visits, three home visits;
- Meetings – Executive Committee, All-Staff (monthly), Senior Staff (2x), Staff Worship Team (weekly), Capital Campaign Steering Team (2x), Social Justice;
- Attended the IRB meeting at NIH & MC Interfaith Council meeting;
- Kept regular office hours and attended to email correspondence and phone calls;

May this season offer you the rest and respite you need and the opportunity to restore your spirit as we move toward the New Year. I hope the community at Cedar Lane can help this holiday season be for you a time that points toward hope.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Abhi Janamanchi