

**Report to the Board of Trustees
Of Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church**
Members of the Senior Staff Team
March 2018

In this report:

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

Assistant Minister:

Pastoral Care:

Pastoral Visit Statistics:

59.5 hours of care given	75 total visits	44 in person	31 by phone
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The “Parents Weathering the Storm” support group is continuing to be very successful. When Norman Allen’s internship ends, I will be taking over the group and transitioning it to something self-sufficient and sustainable.

Betsy Binckes and I developed a procedure for attracting and vetting Pastoral Visitor Candidates. With Board of Trustee support, all pastoral visitors background checks are in progress.

Our Safe Congregations policy does not address the need for background checks for Pastoral Visitors, 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.

This month I organized and co-facilitated the February evening Forum with the Rev. Dr. Debra Haffner. This event focused on being a sexually healthy congregation. Pastoral Visitors showed up to support the congregation in case support was required. Rev. Dr. Haffner is willing to work with our congregation on becoming **sexually healthy and certified as a sexually healthy congregation** through the Religious Institute. **I recommend the Board of Trustees consider this process.**

The Rev. Rebekah Savage and I are in conversation about co-leading a joint training for the UU Rockville and Cedar Lane pastoral visitors. Betsy Binckes has also coordinated both a workshop for the entire church and a pastoral visitor training on grief and loss. Both will be facilitated by a hospice provider. It is our hope that this will lead to a critical mass of participants in a grief support group that the hospice organization doing the training will facilitate at Cedar Lane. Betsy is also taking the lead on coordinating the May 6th Forum. Her contacts were instrumental in creating an awesome panel line up for the evening Forum.

Intern Minister Support:

While Rev. Abhi was in India, I met with Norman to provide support and supervision.

Rites of passage and special services:

- Assisted a member with a ritual for forgiveness.
- Performed a building blessing for the Cedar Lane building.
- Co-Planned a baby blessing which will be broadcast live through the Church of the Larger Fellowship in both Spanish and English in March. The Rev. Tania Marquez and I will be doing this service together.
- Took the lead on organizing/planning the post Parkland shooting vigil which was co-facilitated by Tim Atkins and Rev. Abhi Janamanchi.

Spiritual Development:

“Soul Matters” Meditations are continuing. I created the February and March Meditations. 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. The Religious Education department will take over distributing these packets.

Worship:

I collaborated with the worship team on all of the services for February and led the planning and execution of the February 4th Services.

Membership Engagement and Communications:

This month I co-facilitated the Multicultural Welcome Workshop, with Adrian Graham and Rev. Megan Foley on 2/3. More than 20 Cedar Laners attended! This was a regional training that included members from Pennsylvania, Virginia and Maryland.

Sara Davidson has begun working as the “Director of Communications and Membership Engagement.” She has fully transitioned out of her administrative role. Her computer was down for two weeks, which presented many challenges. She now has a new computer but cannot access files from her old computer. She is asking for a tech person to help.

The move to “membership engagement” is in alignment with Vision 2020. Since it is a shift in how we are doing membership, we expect that it will take a few months of working with staff and volunteers to streamline new processes that fit this model. Sara’s marketing and PR advisory team is instrumental in helping with

the organization and reformatting of marketing collateral, information gathering from the congregation, and creating messaging priorities.

Sara Davidson and Carolyn Morrissey, Volunteer Coordinator, are in conversation about creating a new “Volunteer Board” that will feature one-time volunteer opportunities as well as short and long-term opportunities each month. They are also brainstorming fun ideas to increase volunteer engagement as well as appreciation. The goal is to not just have events to boost volunteerism, but create a culture of joyful volunteerism. The Marketing and PR advisory team is supporting Sara Davidson in creating ways to make finding volunteer opportunities on the website easier.

Our current database remains a stumbling block in our membership tracking process, data-gathering, and engagement processes. We hope to have a more user-friendly one in place by June. Sara Deshler is convening this process.

Social Justice:

- Attended “Enough is Enough” Youth Led protest with Tim Atkins, Ashley Del Sole, Tiffany Lewis, and Babbzz Ricketts.
- Attended County Executive Forum at Northwood High School in Wheaton

Professional Development & Study Leave Report:

I recently registered for a GA 2018/Ministry Days offering to update my critical incident and stress training certifications. These trainings are wonderful for supporting pastoral interventions and post-trauma debriefs. I have also signed up for a certification program in Neuro Linguistic Programing. I have some training in NLP from when I originally became certified as a hypnotherapist and found it very effective in helping people navigate challenging situations quickly. I am hoping to sharpen my skills. The ever-increasing load from the ubiquitous stress created by world events, our current political climate and reported incidents of violence are resulting an in increase of primary and secondary trauma. I feel that I need to have as many tools as possible to support congregants as they navigate these times.

I met with 2 of my professional advisors, my mentor and Spiritual Director this month. I am also meeting regularly with Rev. Abhi and with my Transition Team. Even while Rev. Abhi was in India, we communicated often. As part of my Study Leave, I attended a youth led service in New York, which provided fodder for determining ways to help break down the wall between the “upstairs” and “downstairs” at Cedar Lane.

I will be on vacation from March 26th through the 31st. I will be attending a gathering for UU Religious Professionals of Color from March 14th through the 17th. Additionally:

- I read *The Almost Church Revitalized* by Michael Durrall
- I submitted a book proposal to Skinner House books.

- I had a final video conversation regarding the “Creating Theology Together” curriculum I co-authored for the Fahs Collaborative.
- I am continuing my work with other Latinx colleagues on a bilingual service for GA in 2018.

Director of Lifespan Religious Education:

Greetings Board!

Family Ministry

We had a lovely little Valentine’s Day party for the RE Families. About 15 or so attended, which was a good amount considering space/activities. I like having some of these smaller events to connect families around different holidays.

I continue to send our weekly parent emails, and I am still impressed by the feedback I’ve received on these. Every week a new parent tells me how much they appreciate these weekly emails and my weekly columns for parents.

Lifespan Worship

Children’s Chapels continue to be well attended. I’ve noticed over the past month that a few more adults have started attending, along with parents who are bringing their 4 year olds up for Chapel. Typically, the classes start attending chapel together in Kindergarten.

Lifespan Programming

Children’s RE:

We continue to have 11-12 kids attending the nursery during the first session. Great problem to have! We’re still exploring different ways to help with this baby bump – from hiring an additional attendant to help on Sunday mornings to putting out stronger calls for more volunteers. Our Nursery Attendant, Irene, continues to get extremely positive feedback from parents.

We are beginning brainstorming the Tapestry program for June, which for those who might not recall from last year, is sort of like a toned down Spring B, focused on a theme, and in June instead of May. It will run the last three weeks of June, and this year instead of a closing picnic we’re going to have the picnic be on the kickoff Sunday. Our theme for Tapestry this year will be the seventh principle.

We are also beginning to plan a summer RE program. It is my firm belief, which is shared by the ministers, that we need to have a Sunday morning program for kids during the summer during July and August. This allows parents to attend the service, gives continuity for our children, and also a lot of people go church

shopping during the summer. I'm in discussions with the Social Justice ministry teams to see if they will coordinate this year's Summer program.

Youth Programs:

We've been focused on the plans for the upcoming Boston trip near the end of March for the Coming of Age class. This is the first time any of the RE staff here have actually planned the Cedar Lane trip – although we've got records from the past and the experience of our wonderful group of teachers, it's still been a little bit of a learning curve getting all the t's crossed and i's dotted. Saturday, March 10 we had a joint Middle and High School outing to go see the movie Black Panther – we had 20 youth + parents attend (a number much more than we were expecting!) Our continued hope is one high school youth group event a month, one middle school youth group event a month, and one combined event a month.

I also want to lift up our wonderful OWL (Our Whole Lives) class. In the past month, we've held a panel where students could ask members of the GLBT+ community their honest questions. In the upcoming month, our team is planning for a retreat in order to talk about sexual health more in depth. I hope that in the coming years, we can expand our OWL program to be regularly offering each level of OWL ever year.

We are also exploring how to best support the March for our Lives on the 24th. Your RE Staff team (Tim, Ashley, and Tiffany) along with Rev. Katie went and joined the Montgomery student walkout and protest in DC in response to the Parkland shooting. We saw several of our youth there.

Adult RE:

Rev. Katie, Sara Davidson, and myself held a session of three listening circles to hear from adult congregations about the kind of programming they're hoping to see – both adult religious education and congregational life (aka social / connection building programs.) We've got some good ideas on how to move forward which will lead to hopefully new processes in place and a new program in place for Fall 2018. We had a great forum in February with Rev. Deb Haffner, talking about sexually safer congregations. By the time you read this, we will have had our annual Kiplinger Lecture featuring Frances Moore Lappe. Our Soul Matters groups have launched and have all had their first meeting during late February.

Executive Director:

Staffing Update: We have begun the search to fill the Administrative Coordinator position. We have found a few good candidates but decided to keep the position open until March 19 to increase our pool of candidates. Lucy Dubinsky is our Database Administrator, incumbent of the 20 hour position that will be rolled into the larger position as per the design based on the Workflow Study completed in

December. Lucy has applied for the new position so will be among the candidates we interview. We began the initial interview process this week. Jen Morley and I have been sharing the responsibility for building reservations, it has put us both behind in our work so we look forward to hiring someone to take this on.

FY 2018 Stewardship Update: As of today we have 450 pledges from 692 people for a total of \$906,332. This is a decrease from last month. The average pledge is \$2,014, last year at this time we had 47 more pledges in but for \$2505 less pledged, with a lower average pledge, \$1,822.

Membership: We have 756 members, certifying at **754** members in January. We had 4 new members join this month, Katie Romano Griffin, Brian and Sarah Cuneo, and Hannah Krohn. We had one member pass, Cheryl Zocchi.

Security: We will be holding a Church wide Fire Drill on April 29 after each service. Our initially scheduled date of February 25 was cancelled due to weather. The Officer agreed to provide Active Shooter training, we have scheduled the initial training for May 5. We are still working on designing the security system for the Chalice House in readiness for any guests requiring Sanctuary.

Staff Trainings: This has been a month of extensive staff trainings. We had safety training led by Mary Farrar in addition to two anti-sexual harassment trainings led by an outside consultant, Zarina Durrani. Two of the community organizers from PICO with Dianne Seiffert and Charlene Zellmer led a staff training in preparation for having a guest residing in the Chalice House. The staff will receive CPR/AED training this week.

Compost: the new composting service will allow us to compost a wider collection of items than we have previously. Environmental Task Force on getting the word out to the staff and membership on what can now be composted.

Respectfully submitted,
Sara Deshler

Senior Minister:

Worship

Sunday morning worship services continue to be the focal point of religious life. I am blessed to work with an amazing worship team – Katie, Henry, Tim, & Norman – to plan and review weekly worship. The worship associates continue to play a more involved role in leading worship. Our aim is to provide meaningful and inspiring worship experiences that are designed to appeal, not just to the people in the sanctuary that morning, but anyone who may need the message of liberal religion in their lives. Our worship services have served as a means of promoting our mission and Unitarian Universalism beyond the walls of our church and serving religious liberals near and far.

Worship attendance and collection plate information for the month of February are noted below:

Date	Celebrant	Worship Attendance	Collection & Share The Plate
Feb. 4	Katie	225 (116 + 109)	\$687.00 (AIM - \$712.00)
Feb. 11	Abhi	242 (108 + 134)	\$645.00
Feb. 18	Abhi	269 (83 + 186)	\$715.50 (Rebuilding Together - \$725.50)
Feb. 25	Abhi	251 (103 + 148)	\$1724.50

Pastoral Care

In this reporting period, I provided pastoral support and spiritual counseling to five individuals and/or families in person and by phone. I met with family members of Cheryl Zocchi to plan her memorial service on March 17.

Capital Campaign & Stewardship

One of the most important projects before me this year is to support and strengthen the culture of generosity and stewardship at Cedar Lane. It's been a pleasure to work with the capital campaign steering team to support this goal. The "Building Our Vision" campaign is off to a good start, but we still have work to do. It's not just that we need to better equip the church with resources to pursue the ministry – although that's part of it – we need a strategic understanding of generosity and need to educate ourselves about sustainable stewardship. The annual fund drive, special fundraisers, rental revenue, balanced budgets, capital campaigns, and planned giving; these are all aspects of stewardship, and we need to develop a comprehensive plan for the future.

Staff

I supervise and rely on the good work of our senior staff – Katie, Tim, Sara, & Henry – whose leadership, counsel, and support of staff members and lay leaders have kept us on track.

Governance

The ongoing work of implementing Governance by Policy has continued this year. While we have made overall progress, there is still a considerable amount of work to be done with regard to operational policies, clarifying roles and relationship between the Board, the senior minister, and the senior staff team, developing monitoring mechanisms, and strengthening ministry teams.

Social Justice & Community Involvement

I continue my work on Social Justice, both in supporting congregational activities such as being a sanctuary congregation as well as supporting the continuing work

with the Social Justice team in solidifying their own identity and role in our social justice structures.

I participated in a mass meeting for the **Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival** on Feb. 19 and attended two planning meetings of the DMV coordinating team.

I attended the Cancer Research Group's **Internal Review Board (IRB)** meeting at NIH (Feb. 26).

Larger UU Movement

I preached at the annual conference of the Unitarian Union of Northeast India (UUNEI) on February 4 and met with the Union leadership to explore ways to strengthen partnership between the UUA and the UUNEI and support their efforts to become self-sufficient.

Senior Minister's Log:

- Led **worship** on Feb. 11, 18, 25;
- Participated in a **vigil** for Parkland High School shooting victims (Feb. 15);
- Conducted a **house blessing ceremony** for a member (Feb. 17);
- Submitted column and worship information for March **newsletter**;
- Made three **capital campaign** visits;
- **Met with** – Rev. Katie (weekly), Tim Atkins (weekly), Sara Deshler (weekly), Henry Sgrecci (2x), Mel Kalagian (capital campaign), Jim Anderson & Gail Riley (3x), Green Sanctuary Team, Ron Outen & Nancy Janssen (AIM), to review and discuss congregational programs and ministries;
- **Meetings** – Board, Executive Team, Senior Staff (2x), Staff Worship Team (2x), Worship Associates, Ministry Team Leaders, Capital Campaign Steering Team, Davies Leadership Team;
- Met with five members and families to provide **pastoral support**;
- Kept regular **office hours** and attended to phone calls and email correspondence.

Respectfully Submitted,
Abhi Janamanchi