

Minister's Report

SUBMITTED: APRIL 9, 2018

LIST OF REGULAR MEETINGS AND EVENTS ATTENDED

- ☪ Monthly Board Meeting
- ☪ Monthly Westchester UU Ministers
- ☪ Monthly UUMA Cluster
- ☪ Monthly Committee on Ministry Meeting
- ☪ Monthly Visit with Mentee
- ☪ Monthly New Minister Discernment Group
- ☪ Monthly Executive Committee Meeting
- ☪ Monthly Finance Committee Meeting
- ☪ Twice Monthly Community Coffee
- ☪ Weekly Supervision with DRE
- ☪ Weekly Supervision with Administrator
- ☪ Weekly Staff Meeting

IRREGULAR MEETINGS, TRAININGS, CONSULTATIONS AND RITES OF PASSAGE

William's Wake at a private home in Westport
William McEvoy Memorial in Westport
Letter of Agreement/Compensation Meeting

WORSHIP

Sunday, March 18: All That Is Our Life
Sunday, March 25: Program Group
Sunday, April 1: Easter Sunday
Sunday, April 8: Program Group

Tuesday, March 27: Silent Meditation

March Theme: Wandering/Journey
April Theme: Faith
May Theme: Truth

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

- A. The overriding issue of these past few weeks has been the unexpected death of our Intern Minister, William McEvoy. The ramifications of this death are multidimensional. I'm reckoning with my own grief as well as that of the staff and congregation. I'm navigating the reactions and responses of the larger UU world. And, I'm faced with work that isn't being done and won't be done either this year or next. Some of these things I am picking up, like days William was scheduled to preach and some of these things aren't going to happen like the press release for the Earth Day event.
- B. Relatedly, William's wife, Carrie, is going to make his sermons, all of which she filmed, available online. When we move forward with a memorial here, she'd like to be present for the dedication. She doesn't want to lose the connection with us, although she's also being very protective of her exposure while she's still feeling very fragile.
- C. Last month I said that pastoral care was on the rise. This month, the needs have grown exponentially. This increase is creating a time crunch that's bordering on unmanageable. One of the reasons for this is that William (as Emily before him) was responsible for writing cards and making calls for what I often call frontline pastoral care. This would include people worried about someone else or someone who had minor surgery or mentioned a small loss on a Sunday morning. I've been doing more long-term care, more

serious issues like conflict in a marriage/divorce, domestic violence, mental illness, etc. I've asked for a pastoral care team to help and a few people have stepped forward. I'll be meeting with them soon with the hope that they'll help with the smaller needs.

- D. I have been getting quite a lot of feedback lately, generally from people who want me to do things differently. Unfortunately, their expectations aren't in alignment. For instance, I'm hearing that I'm too present in administrative or institutional parts of congregational life while I'm also getting questions about why I'm not fixing things/systems that don't work so well. I hear that I need to be both more and less of a leader. I hear that I need to be in the pulpit more and that I need to let lay people be more active in worship. I am held accountable if we don't reach fundraising goals and I'm told not to get involved with finances. On the same day, I was told that the congregation needs a direction and it's my job to set it shortly before being told that I need to follow the congregation's lead related to where they want to go. To be honest, if I had my druthers, I'd focus all my attention on worship, pastoral care and social justice, but I'm aware that I'm the only full time professional, that my experience, institutional history and expertise are required if the congregation is going to thrive. With that said, I'm wishing for clear direction for and from the congregation. The experience of hearing so many contradictory things calls into question our clarity of vision and purpose.
- E. It is the norm in most congregations, this one included until last year, for the minister to play a part in nominating members to the board in partnership with the Nominating Committee. The role I played in my first 4 or 5 years was to vet potential board members. They would decide who they wanted to ask and I'd look at the list and let them know if there are any outstanding reasons not to ask someone to a particular role. For an unknown reason, I'm no longer included in the process which is concerning and not an example of best practices.
- F. Our Multi-Congregational Earth Day service is coming up. I am hoping we can talk this up a lot to ensure a respectable attendance from our congregation.
- G. I've been asked about my hours recently. I will post this in the Scoop, but here it is in more detail for all of you.

Tuesdays: Administrative Day. My general hours are 9:30-7:30 or 9:30-9:30. I spend my day responding to email, getting things to the Scoop, organizing worship/order of service, going to meetings like Board, Exec, local clergy, etc. I also have community hours on Tuesday afternoons.

Wednesdays: Administrative Day. My general hours are 9:30-7:30 or 9:30-9:30. This is also a day filled with administrative/institutional tasks. I try to get all meetings into Tuesdays and Wednesdays, when possible. Wednesdays also include staff supervision, social media, web site and facilities issues. I sometimes have pastoral care meetings on either of these days, most often in the office and it's possible on either day that I'll meet a congregant for a meal or coffee, but my attention is largely administrative.

Thursday: Writing Day. I do my best not to answer the phone or email between the hours of 9 and 4. I return correspondence in the evenings.

Friday: Pastoral Care Day. With the exception of a monthly COM meeting, I try not to deal with too many institutional/administrative issues and focus on pastoral issues. Sometimes, I'm in the office on Friday mornings and see people there or sometimes I make home or hospital visits.

Saturday: I work on Saturdays, but it's more free-form. There are often district workshops and congregational gatherings (although these things didn't happen this fall as when they typically do since our energy was focused on the listening conversations). There are also congregational events ranging from Rock and Soul concerts to community rallies to fundraisers. On Saturday nights before a Sunday in the pulpit, I often work in the evening to tweak my sermon or the service.

Sunday: This is a busy and often intense day. In addition to worship, there are meetings and a lot of connecting with people on a variety of levels. I take a break in the middle of the day and spend my evenings on the phone and on email or social media following up with things that happened during the day.

Monday: Theoretically, this is my day off. I do my best not to check email, but invariably, I do. I try not to do any other work, but now that Board meetings are on Tuesdays, I write board reports on Mondays and I often post on Facebook in preparation for the week. On Mondays I see to things like InterGenerate or work I do on the national level.

H. I contributed two chapters to a major new publication by Skinner House, the UU publishing house. The book is called Justice on Earth: People of Faith Working at the Intersections of Race, Class and the Environment. I co-authored a chapter with Rev. Matthew McHale called *Becoming Resilient: Community Life for a New Age* and another myself called *Eating Earth*.

UPCOMING DATES

Saturday, April 14: Sound of Music Fundraiser
Sunday, April 22: Multi-Congregational Earth Day Event
Sunday, April 22: Stephanie Gannon Ordination, Brooklyn (I am preaching.)
Sunday, April 29: RE Visit to Chuang Yen Monestary
Sunday, May 6: RE Visioning
Tuesday, May 15: Final Meeting of this Board
Sunday, May 20: Budget Meeting and Review
Saturday, May 26: Emily DeTar Ordination, Staten Island (I am leading the Laying on of Hands.)
Sunday, June 3: Congregational Meeting
Sunday, June 10: Final service of this program year (Flower Communion)