

**St. Lawrence District Board of Trustees Meeting
Unitarian Universalist Church of Utica
February 9 & 10, 2007**

Note: MSP=Motion made, seconded, passed

Friday, February 9

Attending: Ellen Asprooth, Ernie Hall, Jerol Kent, Robb Smith, Karen Palmer,
Rev. Tom Chulak, Jeanne Crane, Roger Thielking

District Executive Report

Tom reported on the District staff meeting. The District is doing a lot with limited financial resources.

Tom will be ending work with the Ohio Meadville District and the Philadelphia project as of June 30, 2007. Tom wants to look at long term plans with SLD. We need to vision for the future. Our August retreat would be an ideal time. Starting July 1, Tom will be $\frac{3}{4}$ time with SLD and $\frac{1}{4}$ time with Shared District coordination.

Congregations Come First: Tom has been invited to meet with the committee in Houston, TX on February 23.

Program Consultant Report (See attachment #1)

The Growth Committee and Leadership Development Committee are doing good work.

Jeanne held some workshops in Buffalo and the participants seem to be interested in accessing District Service more.

Jeanne is working on a process for helping congregations to develop covenants.

The Saratoga congregation is unable to bring the DRE position up to $\frac{1}{2}$ time quite yet due to a low annual pledge drive. In time this will likely be achieved.

Lifespan Consultant's report (See attachment #2)—Tom highlighted Debby Herman's report.

UUA Trustee Report (See attachment #3)—Ellen emphasized the importance of Open Space Technology at General Assembly this year.

Youth report—Tom reported that Jen Crow has joined the Youth Adult Committee. The YAC is working on the bridging ceremony to be held at District Assembly.

President's Report (See attachment #4)

Ellen reported that there has been good feedback regarding brief news stories of congregations in packet.

Congregations Come First—feedback from other Districts indicates there will likely be changes in the proposal.

Plans for the Anti Racism/Anti Oppression training scheduled for March 24 look good and Ellen anticipates it will meet our needs.

Liaison Reports –provided by Ellen, Ernie, Jerry, Karen, and Robb.

November Board Minutes- Approved MSP

January Conference Call Minutes- Approved MSP

Adjourned

Saturday, February 10

Attending: Ellen Asprooth, Robb Smith, Karen Palmer, Ernie Hall, Jerol Kent, Rev. Ken Mochel, Roger Thielking, Rev. Tom Chulak, Jeanne Crane

Ellen read opening Words--“Waitressing in the Sacred Kitchens” by Meg Barnhouse.

Check In

Report on Shared District Efforts

Tom reported that the Leadership Council of the UUA did not find the funds to support the Four District Shared Ministry proposal

Tom spoke with Tracey Robinson Harris of Congregational Services. This department of the UUA has decided to support the project. The four districts involved are St. Lawrence, Ohio Meadville, Joseph Priestly, and Metro.

The project will look at committing to a partnership of the four districts with the UUA and within the four Districts. The Districts will collectively be contributing \$5000. The UUA will be contributing \$22,000. This will be a three year experiment. Tom will be the coordinator.

Discussion focused on ideas about how this might work organizationally.

Congregations Come First

The initial proposal seems to focus on service delivery from a consumer service model. We are concerned that this proposal misses the importance of fostering relational connections. We are of the mind that shared ministry is a more effective model that prevents “top down” operation.

District Youth Conversation

Karen shared some of the input from District youth conversation held in January. Debby Herman will be asked to review these and think about what might be implemented and how.

Recognition

The following people will be recognized at District Assembly for their service to the District:

Carl Thitchener--chair of the Financial Resources Committee
 Mindy Whisenhunt--Chair of the Religious Education Committee
 Kevin Fox—Board of Trustees member (Youth Representative)
 Betsy Spaulding—Annual Program Fund Representative
 Robb Smith—Vice President of the Board of Trustees
 Ellen Asprooth—President of the Board of Trustees
 Others as they become known

Karen will handle gifts and arrangements.

Team Leadership Institute

There will be five tracks and leaders are lined up for each. The effort will be to have a professional and lay leader for each track. Lenses will focus on specific areas that will go across the tracks. We have some scholarship money available.

Growth Statistics

Ken shared growth statistics regarding the District.

At this point, Ellen Asprooth and Jeanne Crane left the meeting as matters concerning them were to be discussed.

Consultants

Tom made a distinction between the role of coordinators vs. consultants:

A Coordinator serves a program (i.e Dick Gilbert coordinates the Social Justice Council)

A Consultant serves one area (i.e. Christy Multer provides consultation regarding communications)

Tom proposed that we hire a person to report District “stories” for the web, UU World, Interconnections, News packet, etc. Tom is recommending Ellen Asprooth for this role of District Reporter.

*****Motion: Ellen Asprooth be hired as the District Reporter for a stipend of \$2500 beginning July 1, 2007. MSP**

Planning Consultant: Tom recommends Jeanne Crane for this position. The position would involve a total of 10 days a year of service.

*****Motion: Jeanne Crane be hired as the Planning Consultant for a stipend of \$2500 beginning July 1, 2007. MSP**

Ellen and Jeanne returned to the meeting.

District Assembly

Fees:

\$55 for registration

\$65 for late registration

\$25 for teens/young adults

\$25 cost per table

There will be limited home hospitality. Robb is continuing to negotiate with the hotel about the specific arrangements (i.e. costs of tables). Debby Herman will be asked to find child care help. Christy Multer is working on the brochure. The fee for Friday dinner prior to the Gould Lecture will be \$12. Sue will be handling the registration. The congregational banners will hang from the mezzanine. There will not be a banner parade. Naomi will be asked to do the opening worship. Tom will be conducting the closing worship. Robb will have local musician be available for the morning and at the end.

Waivers: Registration fees for presidents will be paid by the District.

Board and Staff registrations are waived.

The District pays hotel fees for each board member's part of a room.

We would like to contribute to a cause during District Assembly.

*****Motion: Ellen will ask the Utica Church to designate an appropriate local agency to receive a donation from a collection at the closing of District Assembly. MSP**

Board members are asked to be available to welcome people to DA.

Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression Workshop

Each Board member needs to register individually if able to attend.

*****Motion: The District will pay from the "board" line the fees for the registration for the Anti racism/AntiOppression workshop. MSP**

Treasurer's Report

Roger has authorized board members to view financial reports through Quick Books online.

*****Motion: Approve treasurer's report. MSP**

Ernie summarized the current financial information. Payments from congregations have been coming in at a steady rate and it is probable that we will make the \$96,000 budgeted amount from regular contributions.

Budget

Ernie reviewed the proposed 2007-2008 budget. We will have a phone conference to approve the final budget on February 20, 6pm.

Recommendations from Peggy Sherman

Ernie reviewed recommendations by Finance Committee related to Peggy Sherman's recommendations.

*****Motion: Approve the conflict of interest policy provided by finance committee. MSP**

*****Motion: Approve record retention policy as presented by finance committee. MSP**

*****Motion: Approve the recommendations from the finance committee with correction of #6 (finance committee—not finance resource committee). MSP**

*****Motion: Approve that we will hire a bookkeeper for a stipend of \$2500 who is overseen by a volunteer treasurer. MSP**

Ernie and Roger will work on getting a notice out to find a bookkeeper and upon finding someone, make a recommendation to the board.

Future District Assembly Dates: We will plan the fourth weekend in April up through 2009.

Officers

Ellen's term on the board is ending in June 2008. Ernie has agreed to serve as president upon nomination and election at the April meeting. Robb's term of three years as vice president needs to end based on the bylaws. Karen has agreed to serve as vice president upon nomination and election at the April Meeting.

Staff Evaluation

Board liaisons will ask cluster congregations about their feelings about district services and staff. Ellen will send information about how we might do this.

Adjourned

Attachment #1

Program Consultant Report to SLD Board

February, 2006

Shared Staffing with OMD-We begin to wind down in OMD and adjust to Karen's resignation.

Attendance at the BCM district staff conference in New Orleans was jammed packed with good information, discussion and experience. We received instruction on a new software tool for distance learning and online meetings that can be downloaded for a 30 day free trial and then is very reasonably priced. I hope to use the trial for Chalice Light Ambassadors training.

4 District Residential Program-UU Team Leadership Institute Do keep checking the Murray Grove website for updates and encourage folks to sign up. The program gets more and more exciting each day. The on-line registration and all the logistics provided by MG are awesome. 5 tracks: Leadership, Growth, Social Justice, Family Ministry and Small Group Ministry. And 5 lenses: lay leadership, emotional systems, multi-culturalism, faith development and UU story.

Barb Green and I meet in Philadelphia with the design team the end of this month. Dave Munro will assist in the governance track and Barb in the faith development lens.

Serving SLD Congregations-With two district board meetings, BCM, and holidays, this was not a time of high activity directly at the congregations. I did visit Buffalo for a board retreat and returned to facilitate a ½ day staff meeting/discussion of roles and how to strengthen services. Also, went to Niagara Falls for a fellowship dinner and a congregational conversation about governance and structure in a small church. I have asked a couple of small congregations to share their by-laws with Niagara since there are some changes they wish to consider. Both groups were most appreciative of district support. I also facilitated a training for facilitators working on a mission process at Utica and will be doing some additional facilitation there.

Committees

The following committees are in my portfolio.

Growth Committee

Chalice Lighters:

The committee has worked hard to reformat application materials and is still in the process of recruiting ambassadors. I drafted a training which Karen West and I will do by phone with print support or online support using PERSONY, the program I learned about at BCM.

Chalice Lighter Sunday will be May 6, and all the above changes as well as info on giving looks great on the district website.

Remember to promote and attend the March 10 program on Growth and Change in Amherst.

Purpose and Possibility. Suzanne McNamara is coordinating. We even have a contingent coming from Akron, Ohio.

Leadership Development Committee

They are working diligently on the District Assembly.

At their next meeting, I will be presenting them with a proposal to have a sub-group dedicated to assisting congregations with a covenanting process. Heidi Levine from Rochester has agreed to lead a team and she will work with me at May Memorial to get experience and help me develop a trainer's guide for her team to use.

Also

I will be attending the UUA *Now Is the Time* Multi-culturalism conference in DC this month. However, I have a conflict in OMD that will prevent me from participating in our district training.

I continue to add my voice and unique perspective as a one-of-a-kind experimental program consultant for leadership, growth and planning to the Congregations Come First conversation and to support Tom in this four district shared district ministry experiment which I truly believe sets out a future model that works smarter and great possibility for increasing transformational work within the UUA.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Crane

Attachment #2

REPORT TO THE ST. LAWRENCE DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES From the Acting Program Consultant for Lifespan Faith Development February 9-10, 2007

- DRE Transitions:** I have been in touch with the three departing DREs (Albany, Schenectady and Syracuse 1st) and their respective Search Committees. I have sent exit interview forms to the DREs as well as to the Search Committees/Boards, and have offered to conduct these myself in person if they so desire. I will have a personal meeting with Beth Scott, formerly of Syracuse 1st, on Friday morning, February 9th. The minister of the Schenectady church would like to have me visit and meet with their search committee – she was on retreat at the time of contact and said she would be in touch with me on her return. Although I have already spoken with them, I will probably meet with the Schenectady and Albany DREs when I am in the area. Albany’s search committee had assistance from Karen Lapidus and is doing well. Syracuse 1st’s committee does not feel a need to meet with me, but I have provided some requested resources around issues of governance and DRE supervision.
- New DREs:** I have sent email invitations to all new DREs to talk with me by phone or to set up visits. I have spoken at length to the new DREs in Saratoga Springs, Rochester Universalist and Binghamton. I expect to meet the new DRE in Utica during the Board dinner prior to this meeting, and will follow up on contacting DREs in Plattsburgh and Canandaigua. The Saratoga DRE had some questions and concerns, which I think will be resolved, but I plan to also visit with her when I travel to the Albany/Schenectady area.
- Youth-Adult Committee and Bridging at D.A.:** I have spoken at length with the district Youth Coordinator about a number of issues, and attended the YAC meeting in Syracuse on February 3rd. The YAC has agreed to work with me on plans for a senior bridging ceremony during this year’s District Assembly (as approved at the most recent Board meeting). They would like our bridging youth to be welcomed/received by members of our young adult community, and will invite YRUU alumni and other UU young adults – I hope we will be able to offer participating young adults a reduced rate for DA registration. The YAC also wants to attract YRUU youth to DA, so that the bridgers will be supported and celebrated by their peers as well as by the adult community. They have asked about having a room designated for a youth social time during the business meeting. Ellen has pointed out that YAC members would need to be present to present their candidate for the Board, and to vote on the slate of nominees, so maybe they could enter toward the end of the meeting? I have also spoken with Utica’s minister about inviting any youth who come to DA to spend Friday night at the church for a coffeehouse and overnight. The YAC will be presenting a proposal to the Utica board for their approval. This would not be like a con, but teens would have to be accompanied by advisors and the same rules would apply. However there would be no workshops planned, no meals provided, etc. This may or may not work out, depending on the Utica Board and staff, but the YAC thought it would be a way to attract more teens to the meeting.
- Religious Education Committee:** I have been in touch with members of the RE Committee, especially to discuss their future membership and leadership needs, as both the chair and the

treasurer will be leaving as of April's meeting. I have suggested that it might be a good time to eliminate the position of RE Committee treasurer. The committee used to maintain multiple lines/accounts, but now that there is only one line, it seems to me that having all RE expenses go through two treasurers is a bit redundant. The only significant impact from this change would be that congregations hosting trainings or events would need to handle their own registration and fees themselves, which I believe is what other district groups do anyway. Ann D'Attilio, the retiring treasurer, agrees with this rationale, and suggested that I check with the district treasurer for his thoughts.

- **District Assembly:** In addition to coordinating the youth bridging ceremony at DA, I will also lead the RE Workshop this year, on the subject of congregational bridging ceremonies – the philosophy behind the practice, and suggestions and guides for planning this rite of passage.
- **Cluster Meetings:** I met with DREs from the Southern Tier cluster on February 7th, and we had some very good conversation – they decided to meet on the second Monday of each month, alternating between Oneonta and Ithaca, and will invite religious educators from the Syracuse area as well. This group requested a one-day Youth Advisor training to be held this winter or spring, which I will follow up on in the coming week. I will also be attending the regular cluster meeting (not specifically RE) of the western NY group in Amherst later this month, and will discuss options to meet their request for a Safe Congregation workshop. I also plan to check in with DREs attending the March Renaissance module in Canton, and have spoken with the Canton DRE about meeting with their RE cluster group prior to the training.

Currently planned or completed visits (per above):

February 3: YAC meeting in Syracuse

February 7: Southern Tier RE cluster meeting in Ithaca

February 9: Meeting with former DRE from Syracuse 1st

February 22: Western NY cluster meeting in Amherst (to plan for future workshop)

March 12: So. Tier/Central NY meeting in Oneonta

March 23: North Country RE cluster meeting and Renaissance module visit

Date TBD: Visit to Capital district to meet with Schenectady search committee and various DREs.

I would like to note that Karen Lapidus has been a great help to me, both bringing me up to speed by phone, answering questions, and emailing me resources.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Herman

Attachment #3

UUA Board of Trustees Meetings
Boston, January 19-21, 2007
Report to St. Lawrence District
David Friedman, Trustee (dfriedman@uua.org , 585-865-5918)

(The request being honored is to report in bulleted format.)

- ***UUA Financial Matters***
 - The independent audit is finally complete, with a “clean opinion” rendered by auditors.
 - The 2008 budget was set, up about a million-and-a-half in expenditures and income, and deemed an “exciting programmatic budget” by Executive VP Kay Montgomery.
 - Keep an eye out for the new Annual Program Fund Quarterly Newsletter, and its stories of generosity in congregation settings.
 - Stewardship and Development staffing is being re-arranged per Rev. Dan King’s return to parish ministry.
 - The trust documents necessary to underpin the new health insurance program were put into place.

- ***General Assembly Matters***
 - We have pulled out of Minneapolis for the 2010 General Assembly, and a different year there is sought. All their major hotel contracts are up for renewal in April, 2010, and the UUA cannot chance being in situation of needing to cross picket lines to do GA.
 - The registration fee for the 2007 GA has been raised to fund a lowering of child care registration to \$25 per day.
 - The Open Space Technology sessions are a “big deal” and are now well supported by our UU Ministers Association. This will be a good GA to be at.

- ***Matters of the 2009 Elections at GA, Salt Lake City***
 - At the moment, two candidates are actively in the discernment process for seeking the presidency. Others may yet enter the process. Petitions may be filed as late as Feb. 1, 2009. Formal campaigning may not commence before January, 2008.
 - In recognition of above, I have covenanted with the other UUA Trustees to refrain from endorsing, promising to endorse, or providing financial support to any candidate for UUA President, Moderator, or Trustee at Large before the General Assembly of 2008. We MAY engage in conversations with those seeking information in the discernment process for running. Trustees may host some forums, possibly regionally, issue DVD’s of the forums, or otherwise assist congregations knowing candidates, thus the neutrality.

- ***Miscellaneous Matters***
 - Keep an eye out for the new Tapestry of Faith materials to come out on the new UUA Web site. April is still the expected full web-site launch.
 - UUA Health Care. For congregations who joined the UUA Health Care plan but who have employees who did not sign up, employees who want coverage need wait for the next open enrollment time. But those non-joining congregations which NOW officially decide

to join in, this is a new “qualifying event” for employees enabling their immediate sign up.

- **90** congregations have grown more than **25%** in the last 6 years, versus **6%** for the association as a whole.
- Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth process will now occur at the Ministers Association Executive committee, and likely in most of their chapter meetings.
- Consider signing up for the electronic UU World. Go to www.uuworld.org and near the right hand top, pick the tab for “get email updates”.
- ***General Investment Fund, a reminder***
- Congregations are reminded that the GIF, for around 1% in total fees offers a well managed investment program, with Socially Responsible Investing screens and Shareholder Activism

Attachment #4**St. Lawrence District President's Report – February, 2007**

Karen Lapidus' Resignation: Because no one – not even Karen – had much notice of her resignation, responding to it involved a lot of discussion and planning during the last two months. I'm glad to report that the response to our appointment of Debby Herman to take the part-time Lifespan Faith Development position in St. Lawrence has been excellent, as has Debby's performance since she began work.

Congregations Come First: As directed by the Congregations Come First Team, I met with our UUA Trustee, David Friedman, and our co-employed staff, Tom Chulak and Jeanne Crane (our APF representative was also invited, but was unable to attend) to discuss the CCF proposal. I also distributed the proposal to board members for comment, and the comments received were included in our discussion. We support the team's vision for the future, as well as efforts to make specialized services available to every congregation, but we raised concerns about making service delivery our focus. Rather, we said, service delivery should happen within the context of shared ministry. David, who is a member of the CCF team, arranged for Tom to attend the group's next meeting and explain this point of view in more detail. I understand that other districts have raised concerns similar to ours and I expect that there will be revisions to the proposal.

Congregational News Summary: Based on board liaison reports and church newsletters, I put together a summary of news items from our congregations for our January packet. I received a number of positive responses and will plan to do a similar summary after this meeting, to be distributed by email and posted on the web site.

District Finances: In January, I participated in a meeting of our Financial Resources group and a day-long finance committee meeting which included budget planning for the 07-08 fiscal year. Detailed reports will be presented at our meeting and included with the minutes, but in general, our finances are in decent shape, and we continue to improve our financial practices.

AR/AO Training: I've been in touch with Lynn Ashley of the Social Justice Council as its planning group has worked out details for the Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression Training in March. The group has done an excellent job putting together a training which will help our congregations meet the challenge issued at last year's General Assembly at the same time it prepares district leaders to work in this important area.

- Ellen Asprooth