

Minister's Report to the Board August 2017

My service to the congregation was reduced this month, as I took half of my month-long vacation from mid-July through the first of August. I will take additional vacation time in late January and then be furloughed for February.

Since most of my meetings and activities happen in the first half of each month, there was no significant reduction in that part of my work. I met with the Worship and Membership Committees, the Committee on Ministry, and I will meet today with the Social and Environmental Justice Council prior to tonight's Board meeting. I also met with Suzi as she prepares for an adult programs survey, and we begin planning for fall programming. In addition, planning for the August 27 Animal Blessing service has begun.

When I am on-island, I regularly attend Sunday Services, even when I am not in the pulpit.

Recent individual meetings with members have included conversations about personal difficulties, discussion of RE needs, reactivating the Pastoral Associates, and my monthly meeting with Rick.

The PFLAG Board, on which I serve as your minister, also met this week. That group is supporting this weekend's Queer Pride Parade, sponsoring an upcoming community forum on Gender Identity (which we hope SEJC will co-sponsor), and distributing a film, *Gen Silent*, which is about challenges facing aging people in LGBTQ communities.

My time away was a mixture of restful and inspiring times, primarily during my week at UU camp, and hectic times, when I traveled to Eugene and back twice in one week. The first trip was to help a family member in need and the second to spend time with my son who was visiting from the Rhode Island.

August is planning time for the beginning of a new congregational year in worship, in adult programs, and in governance. Looking ahead, I hope we can begin planning for a Board retreat soon. This will be an opportunity to deepen personal connections, gain knowledge of each others' working styles, and explore goals and priorities—free of a specific task-focused agenda.

The other action that I request the Board take at this time is authorize the Personnel Committee, AKA the Board Officers, to begin the hiring process for a new child care staff person. This was authorized in the budget, has been requested by RE volunteers and, with new babies in the house, will soon be needed.

In my personal life, my sensitivity about disability issues has been heightened by assisting my disabled pet. More about that is at <http://www.seattletimes.com/photo-video/photography/wanderings-wheelpets2/>

Minister's Report to the Board September 2017

Not surprisingly, my letter to the Congregation (in route at this writing) has filled much of my thought. I look forward to it being just one piece of information received and processed. I have shared the news with very short list of Congregational leaders with whom I wanted to talk directly. To accommodate others who may want to do the same, I am planning on "mobile office hours" over the next couple weeks. I will announce via ENEWS times when I will be in coffee shops in Oak Harbor, in Coupeville, and in Langley, as well as times at UUCWI to be available to any who might wish to talk with me.

Meanwhile, the work of the congregation continues. I have met with the usual committees, (Shared Ministry, Adult Programs, Worship and Membership) and will meet with the Social and Environmental Justice Council before our Board meeting. I also attended the Leadership Council meeting.

As typically happens in the summer, I was in the pulpit less. Since the Board last met, I lead the August 27 Animal Blessing and the annual Ingathering Service. I have begun planning conversations for the upcoming September 24 and October 8 and 22 Services. The themes are Life Changes, Atonement, and Facing Death.

A number of leaders from various traditions have agreed to lead a session of the upcoming Adult Programs offering called Exploring Contemplation that begins October 12.

I have been in communication with former member Barb Hutton's daughter to arrange for a memorial service for Barb here at UUCWI on a yet-to-be determined date. I am waving any fee and reported that we would not charge for the space. Barb was a regular here before and after her signing the book in 2009.

Beyond UUCWI, I have been working to promote a PFLAG Event titled *The Science of Gender and Orientation* which is being held here this Saturday from 1:30 to 4:30. It will include good material for all of us to increasingly understand.

Looking ahead, I will not be traveling to Arizona for a UU Service Committee clergy Borderlands trip, as there was not sufficient enrollment. Instead, I will be traveling to San Diego that week to attend the UUA Multicultural Mosaic Conference, which will be a broader exploration of how we might individually and as congregations engage in deeper work to engage in our Association's renewed commitment to continue anti-racism and anti-oppression work.

My furlough in February will offer additional opportunities for personal growth and travel as I am planning to be part of both a mediation retreat in Mexico, led by my Buddhist teachers, and a Habitat for Humanity Build in Guatemala. My work and my life are rich and rewarding.

Report to the Board October 2017

The announcement of my intention to leave UUCWI in June has elicited interesting responses from others and for me internally. Some expressed mock anger and honest disappointment but most have congratulated me on my coming retirement. I repeatedly remind folks that I still have 9 months for my departure to gestate.

My anxiousness about this announcement was a bigger stressor on me than I had fully realized. It was, I believe, a key factor in the cold and sinus infections that have followed.

Though I have taken more asthma medications and had more naps, this has not been a month of diminished responsibilities. In addition to the usual monthly Committee meetings and conversations with individuals, I have been busy coordinating schedules for eight different presenters who will be sharing their practices as part of the experiential Adult Program “Explorations of Contemplative Practices” that begins tomorrow night with a Qigong teacher. Other mediation and movement teachers will be coming each week through November.

In the week following my announcement, in order to be available to people who might want to talk, I scheduled off-site office hours on Wednesday mornings on September 13, 20, and 27 in Oak Harbor, Coupeville, and Langley. They were very sparsely attended, with only one person coming in Oak Harbor and two in Langley. My other informal times with congregants were the Lunch Bunch and the Wine and Cheese gathering.

I led worship services on September 24 about “The Chapters of Our Lives” and on October 8, “Our Atonement.” Prior planning and assistance helped strengthen both. Both were well received. Each sermon required several rewrites, so it took more time in preparation than is sometimes the case. Channeling both David Bowie and the fire and brimstone spewing Jonathan Edwards were interesting experiences ;-). Planning for the services in October and November continues.

I attended services on the Sundays I was not in the pulpit to connect with folks and to better integrate the content of my comments with those from other services. I also attended the Oct. 17 Mabon ritual and lunch with our UU Pagans.

In addition to Sunday service, I have been in conversation with members of former member Barb Hutton’s memorial service, now scheduled for October 29. Estrangement within the family has made this a bit more complex than is sometimes the case. I am attempting to offer some mediation.

This has been a busy time in other arenas as well. Locally, PFLAG hosted a day-long training here at UUCWI on the Science of Gender Diversity. It was excellent, and some UUCWI members attended. UUCWI, as the host, also garnered some positive publicity

in the local press, where I was interviewed. The monthly PFLAG meeting was better attended than of late and offered an opportunity to refer a family to our OWL curriculum facilitators.

In the larger UU community, I had the privilege to be present at and participate in a small way in the Installation of my colleague, Reverend Cecilia Kingman as the new Minister of Faith and Justice at the Edmonds UU Church. At such events, UUs do more “high church” with processions, recessional, robes, and stoles, et al., than is our norm.

I also was a participant at the NW UU Justice Networks annual Summit at University Unitarian in Seattle last Saturday. I had agreed previously to moderate a keynote panel and ended up substituting for a colleague as a panel participant. It went well. Six UUCWI members attended.

Here at UUCWI, a UU 101 class for prospective new members is scheduled for this Sunday. We anticipate six to eight attendees.

Life away from here has also been somewhat stressful. Like all, I find the disasters in nature and in the political world bring stress. In addition, we concurrently are selling a home we own in Port Townsend and purchasing a lot in Eugene. Meanwhile, our failing dog requires extra care and determining the timing of looming euthanasia is challenging. I am also officiating and helping to plan a memorial service for a family member next week.

In this busy time, I have chosen not to travel to San Diego at the end of the month for the UUA Mosaic Conference. It did not seem to be, at this time, the best use of my time or of the allotted Professional Development budget. I will be attending the UU Minister’s Association Fall Professional Days Oct. 29-Nov. 1. Next month, I will fly to San Francisco for training as a Regional Congregational Transitions Consultant.

In Faith,
Dennis