

Notes from the Town Hall Meeting of October 8, 2017

The Shared Ministry Committee facilitated a town hall meeting on Sunday, October 8 immediately following the worship service. Questions from the congregation were directed to Bob Egbert, representing Social Justice committees; Spike Harrison, Board president; Carl Reed, Board VP Finance, Laura Latham, Board Personnel and Life Faith Development Council; and Aiden Jameson, LFD youth representative.

Presented below is a summary of the questions and responses:

Q. What is the status of YRUU? How many youth are enrolled? What does it need to get going, and how many members are there in the group?

A: (Laura Latham and Aiden Jameson) YRUU needs more adult volunteers who aren't parents. Parents are currently serving as volunteers, but their presence has an effect on the group dynamic. The Youth Adult Council is being revived, and the YRUU also needs adult volunteers for that committee. Anyone interested in volunteering should contact Laura Latham or Cindy Honeycutt. There are currently seven active teen members of YRUU.

Q. What plans are there for insulating the ceiling of the sanctuary?

A: (Spike Harrison) That project has been completed.

Q. Could we add more handicapped parking spots in the parking lot?

A: (Spike Harrison) We are repairing and enlarging the parking area and driveway and hope to have it done within the year.

Q. Could we have a new water fountain so members could have a cool drink of water? Also, could we have a table and chairs set up so we can converse during coffee hour?

A: (Spike Harrison) We will bring it up to the Board.

Q. What is our procedure for outside groups that rent a room and leave a mess we have to clean up? Do we have a damage deposit?

A: (Spike Harrison) We have not gotten money out of the use of the rooms as we should. If a group leaves a mess, they aren't allowed back.

Q: What is the status of the repairs to the building?

A: (Jane Haddad) We have a new front door, new back doors, the list of things that have been done is very long. Often when we repair something, we uncover a new problem which needs to be addressed. The kitchen will be renovated next.

Q: What is our current membership? How much have we grown over the past year? 5 years? How do we determine how many members we have? What is an "active" member?

A: (Rev Alex) Our official membership number is approximately 200, and that overall number has not fluctuated much in the last 5 years. According to our bylaws, an active member is one "1) whose signature has been in the Membership Book at least twenty-eight (28) days; and 2) who participates in the activities of the Church; and 3) who supports the Church financially."

In terms of attendance, if everyone who comes through the building is counted each week, the number would be around 700.

Q: How is RE attendance doing compared to one year ago and five years ago.

A: (Laura Latham) There are no figures available for five years ago. Last year, we averaged about 8 children each Sunday with one class for everyone. This year, we have about 20-25 children in a preschool class, a 1st & 2nd grade class, a 3rd – 5th grade class and a middle school class.

Q: Is there a new directory available?

A: (Spike Harrison) There should be a password-protected directory online soon. The roll-out of the new website has gone more slowly than anticipated.

Q: When will we place banners on the outside of the building, such as "we believe in the inherent worth and dignity of all people"?

A: (Spike Harrison) The issue was scheduled for discussion during the Oct. 10 Board meeting. The Board has decided to do it, but has not yet chosen a message. They will work toward a consensus.

Q: Do we have plans for hiring a more diverse staff?

A: (Laura Latham) We encouraged applicants from diverse backgrounds, but there were none for the DLFD position, and Megan was the most qualified for the Congregational Administrator position.

Q. Are there plans to show thanks to volunteers and staff in support for all they do? Any suggestions about how we can do better?

A. We promote use of thank-you cards to acknowledge our volunteers and staff, as well as public recognition for service and contributions to our church. We always welcome suggestions for improvement.

Q. I would like to see an occasional potluck after worship service.

A. In light of Bill Ferguson's stated love of potlucks, we should look into having them again.

Q. With all the renovation and repairs, should we assume that we will be staying in this building for a while? Has any more thought been given to building an addition to gain space?

A. That has not been determined at this time.

Other questions not addressed publicly due to time constraints:

Q. Could we start a CUUP chapter? How about other different types of celebrations such as goddess celebration in the spring?

A. Suggestion will be passed on to Minister and DLFD

Q. Other suggestions/requests:

a. Open the service welcoming all to UUCR - e.g. "If you believe in God, many gods, no god - whatever your gender orientation or ethnicity, we seek truth, justice, and equality."

b. A newcomers table at coffee hour with a tablecloth of a recognizable color that is mentioned at the beginning of the service.

c. Close the service with: Go in peace / go making peace / walk gently / love mightily / bow to the mystery

d. Explain the acronyms

Q. *Why no covenant groups?*

A. There are existing covenant groups that continue to successfully build relationships among church members. Starting new covenant groups is always a possibility. If you are interested in starting new groups, communicate with Rev. Alex.

Q. *Need more interesting services...*

A. We will pass on this information to the Minister and the Sunday Services committee.

Q. *Why is the whole church body not invited to contribute funds when something artistic or otherwise is to be added to our church. Maybe everyone would like to feel a part - Only a few "select" ones contributed. Why?*

A. If you are interested in contributing to a beautification project, please contact the Building Enhancement Committee or the Board President.