

The All Souls Church, Unitarian Story

“Moving from Midsize to Large Size”

Prepared by Meredith Higgins for Midsize Church Conference

The following events and activities were part of the ASC transition, showing many contributions and decisions contribute to the re-vitalization of a congregation. This list is being updated (including the addition of financial data) as we at All Souls think together to understand and remember our recent dramatic changes. For more information, contact Meredith Higgins at higginsrfp@aol.com.

Preface - June 14, 1998 – the vote to discharge the minister and the sadness and despair of the many members

- Reconciliation Retreat July 11, 1998

Paula Cole Jones, facilitated and led the reconciliation projects for the following year.

10 task forces formed including – Adult spirituality, Dialogue on race, finances, worship, reconciliation, vision, religious education, welcoming, etc

- Ministerial transition

1998 – 2000 - Three program years (September – August)

1998 – 1999

Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) 159,

Members 400+ certified to UUA (cert) 372

- Congregational Dialogue and decision process
 - o Trained facilitators
 - o Specific agenda – three questions
 - Worship patterns for next year
 - Interim minister or consultant
 - Ready to start a search committee
 - o Committees, groups, and general discussions
- Results – over 200 participants

- Worship: Some guests, some lay, some minister
- Dare to dream – seek an interim minister with consulting experience
- Yes, choose a search committee and use a different approach to selecting/appointing the members
- Ministerial transitions – Rev Alma Nieves resigns, Rev John DeTaeye becomes Acting Associate Minister
- Alban consultation – Ed White
- Other diversion - Organ repair lawsuit
- Search Committee to Nashville General Assembly

1999 – 2000

ASA 161

Members 400+, cert 385

- Part time interim consulting minister - Rev. Terry Sweetser
- Jubilee I and II workshops held
- Beyond Categorical Thinking Workshop – led by UUA
- Friends of All Souls in neighboring churches for \$ support
- We learn to put on a celebration – Music Director Mills farewell
- Six leaders to Midsize Church Conference in Atlanta
 - Alice Mann and size transitions
 - Team building 14 hour train ride

2000 – 2001

ASA 201

Members 400+ cert 362

- Journey Toward Wholeness workshop
- Major bequests
 - Ongoing– Beckner, Shively,
 - new large bequests - Mullendore, Holmwood, Katz-Jacoby
 - Board meets with Beckner/Shively committee and sets new endowment policy
- Innovative, creative new music director, John Strang
- Full time Interim minister –Rev David Keyes willing to tackle issues

- Changes in liturgy – processions, calling names into the silence, praying, silent joys and concerns candles
- Moving toward Policy Governance
- Board members begin serving in Sunday greeter role
- Candidating week – a unanimous, excited search committee
- Calling the minister, Rev. Robert Hardies, age 29
- Covenant Groups Started
- Jubilee singers perform at General Assembly in Cleveland (over 40 people from ASC attend GA)
- Dedication of first All Souls Quilt
- Reinvigorated auction
- Celebration Sunday (pledge campaign) introduced
- January 2001 – Protest Inaugural concert with Dick Gregory and others
- May 2001 Sermon and Sunday workshop by Rev. Richard Speck, JPD District Executive
- KUUMBA Players social justice theater group formed by Elizabeth Andrews with core support of others

2001 – 2003 - Three years of growth, numerically and as a faith community

2001 – 2002 ASA 333 Members 474+ cert 474

- September 9, 2001 – Rev Hardies' first service
- September 11, 2001 – Planes into buildings DC, NY, PA – the Need for spiritual support, add'l services, sermon changes
- Sunday collections doubled to \$8000 after Rev. Hardies first two sermons
- 2 Postal workers die of Anthrax – memorial service held at ASC
With 1000 + in attendance
- Sacred Space/Sacred Art events
- Dancer in Residence

- Dedication of Memorial Quilt (second quilt) - September
- Celebration Sunday introduced for canvass
- Rev Rob Hardies emphasized establishing relationships of trust especially during his first year
- Rev Hardies introduces “Deep Chair Discussions’ into Board meeting agenda to stimulate big picture reflection and discussion
- Rev Hardies recommended and Board agreed on importance of getting back to being fair share to UUA and JPD, in spite of the financial challenges
- A. Powell Davies (1902- 1957) 100th Birthday Celebration, Mrs Davies speaks

2002 – 2003 ASA 420 Members 475+, cert 401

- Visioning process – New Mission and Ends Statement approved at Annual Meeting
- DC Children’s Choir starts
- Policy Governance implemented by BOT
- Roots and Wings classes start
- Mid-size church conference – Jazz and covenant groups
- KUUMBA Players begin
- Hosted Youth of Color conference
- Town Hall meeting over controversy regarding Thomas Jefferson picture in the Library

2003 - 2004 ASA 500 Members – 500+, cert 508

- Decision to call an associate minister
- Help from Chalice Lighters
- Weekend on the bay
- Rev. Shana Goodwin – first called associate/woman minister
- Social Justice retreat at ASC led by UUA – most attended of all UUA led SJRetreats so far – over 150 people

- KUUMBA Players “*Free to Be You and Me*” brings in \$9000 over expenses to ASC operating fund
- March for Women’s Lives – 1400 at Sunday worship

2004 – 2005 ASA 501 Members – 700+, cert 560

- Full time social justice ministries staff person hired
- Religious Educator position becomes full time
- Committee on Ministry led Covenant of Right Relations process
- A Dialogue on Race and Ethnicity (ADORE) works with committees on anti-racism approaches
- Multi-cultural ministries task force begins work
- Music program produces CD *Music from All Souls*
- Organization around Sudan (Darfur) issues
- Leadership Development Process strengthened
- Kwanzaa service/observation strengthened
- KUUMBA Players produce “*Save the Humans*” – a play focusing on ecological issues
- All Souls Church, Unitarian designated one of the first four UU “Breakthrough Congregations” and invited to present in the plenary session of the General Assembly in Fort Worth, Texas in June 2005

2005 – 2006 ASA 526 Members – 750+, cert 636

Canvass goal \$800,000 exceeded (to over \$819K)

- Long Range Planning – board approved Jan 06
- Multicultural ministry goals approved
- Host of Progressive Religious movement conference (May 06)
- KUUMBA players produce original production “*We Are*” based on songs by church member Dr Ysaye Barnwell of *Sweet Honey In the Rock* singing group

For information on the above, contact higginsrfp@aol.com