

Report on behalf of the MidAmerica Region Board of Trustees

March 18, 2022

In last year's report, I highlighted some of the efforts that your Board of Trustees has undertaken in support of the Board's mission statement: *to strengthen and make more explicit the connections between our congregations, the Region, and the UUA*. We spent some time at a virtual retreat this fall examining that mission. While we didn't officially adopt a new mission statement, we have continued to examine our roles and responsibilities, both defined and implied. That has included a review of a covenant agreed upon by the Board, and revisiting a previous three-way covenant between Regional Staff, the UUA Director of Congregational Life, and the Board.

A tangible product of these conversations and the desire to clarify expectations and relationships between the board and staff is in development thanks to the time and efforts of Regional Lead Reverend David Pyle. We thank him for dedicating sabbatical time to the special project of developing a written policy manual to guide our work and formalize some of the structures that have been informally in place.

In addition to these foundational conversations, the Board continued to explore next steps following our collective reading of the 2020 Commission on Institutional Change Report: *Widening the Circle of Concern*. One major decision was made to pilot a project which would allocate proceeds from an investment account for three distinct purposes "in the service of dismantling white supremacy culture and supporting BIPOC leaders and members of our faith community":

- 1) Special projects for "the future of our faith"
- 2) Scholarships for BIPOC members to attend RA, GA, or other leadership opportunities such as Midwest Leadership School to "maintain our faith"
- 3) A grant program for MidAmerica congregations participating in Hope for Us Conflict Engagement (a collaborative process designed to help congregations in conflict) to "respond to hurt within our congregations" with an emphasis on supporting BIPOC clergy and lay leaders who feel harmed by their congregation.

Stay tuned for more information as these efforts unfold.

As one of the explicit responsibilities of the board is fiduciary, I am pleased to once again report that the Region's financial status is strong. Of course, there has been substantial savings in the travel line items, so the 2022-23 budget will have some adjustments. None of the work of the Region would be possible without the generous support we receive from MidAmerica congregations. We appreciate all of that support, especially that of our Honor Congregations, as well as the support of individuals who have contributed to the Friends of MidAmerica. We know that the last two years have created financial strains and a shift in how we "do church." And we are grateful to all of the Regional staff who have continued to respond and adapt along with all of you.

I am also pleased to report that the Board experienced much less turnover this year than in some years past. Rev. Mandy Beal stepped down from her position in November for personal reasons, and the Board welcomed David Jackoway to the seat in March. I am optimistic that the positive trend will continue, as I am the only member departing this year at the end of my term, having served six years on the Board.

I thank you all for this opportunity and look forward to following the continued efforts of my colleagues.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Lemmer
President, MidAmerica Region Board of Trustees