

Jim Key
UUA Moderator and
Chief Governance Officer

October 2015

Report to the UUA Board of Trustees

Congregational and other visits

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| July 13 | Winston-Salem, NC – Participated in Moral March for Voting Rights with NC NAACP |
| August 12 | Savannah, GA – Met with minister of UU Church of Savannah |
| August 16 | Bluffton, SC – Preached at UU Congregation of the Lowcountry |
| September 14-18 | Boston, MA – Attended GAMAP, Grid, and GAPC meetings |
| September 25-26 | Ashland, OR – Conducted <i>Governance as Leadership</i> Workshop for three congregations and preached at Rogue Valley UU Fellowship |
| October 4 | Winston-Salem, NC – Preached at UU Fellowship of Winston-Salem |
| October 5-6 | Pokagon, IN - Met with Heartland UUMA Chapter |
| October 8 | Statesboro, GA – Participated in Religious Affairs/Social Justice Roundtable at Georgia NAACP Convention and Civil Rights Conference |

Narrative

I am bringing three initiatives to the attention of the board with a request for approval for two of them: a new approach to our Annual Program Fund, the impact of covenanting rather than membership, and funding GA delegate scholarships. All three initiatives are vital to our Ends.

Additionally, I want the board to reflect on our Sources of Authority and Accountability, specifically the Vision of Beloved Community, as it relates to Black Lives Matter (BLM) activism. We are expected to hear from the Administration on staff activities around BLM. We will have experienced our Board Retreat on Thursday, led by Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis and Rev. John Janka of The Middle Project. That retreat will focus on racial justice within the context of Gil Rendle's monograph *Spiritual and organizational leadership in the in-between time – or why better isn't good enough*. This monograph has been previously sent to you and is in OurBoardRoom.

Annual Program Fund (APF) – Our broadest Global Ends or Shared Vision statement is 1.0: *"A healthy Unitarian Universalist community that is alive with transforming power, moving our communities and the world toward more love, justice, and peace in a manner which assures institutional sustainability."* (Emphasis mine.)

I have often said that I have more concern and see more risk in our out-looked revenue streams than in our ability to manage expenses. Reliable sources of revenue are vital to our institutional sustainability. APF is our most significant source of annual funding and the most visible and practical expression of our covenantal theology. Therefore any changes to APF formulas and approaches require both the Board's and Administration's deep engagement with our congregational leaders, both called and elected. We have the experience of the Southern Region's GIFT program (Generously Investing for Tomorrow) as we consider how we will move forward together.

The per-member model currently in use in four of our regions is a disincentive to growth. We seek a model that is simple and perceived as fair. Most importantly, we seek a system that is sustainable into an uncertain future. I have asked Larry Ladd, our Financial Advisor, to brief the board at the October Board meeting about a *Moving Forward Together* task force I have asked him to convene. It is charged to engage with our stakeholders about several approaches to APF, guide the board in its discernment and report progress to the Board in

January. It is my hope the task force will bring a recommendation to the board before June for our approval and support.

No matter the model of governance any institution embraces, the six roles for any board are: visioning, policy-making, stewardship, sponsorship, advocacy, and consultancy. (Appendix 1.) For me, and specifically at this moment in time, the Stewardship and Sponsorship roles– as expressed in APF and other revenues - are the most significant and important roles. They challenge this board to set the Association on a more secure course and engage our congregations on the promises we make in our covenantal theology.

Renewing the Covenant – Our Ends 1.1 and 1.2 state:

Congregations and communities are covenanted, accountable, healthy, and mission driven. And, Congregations and communities are better able to achieve their missions and to spread awareness of Unitarian Universalist ideals and principles through their participation in covenanted networks of Unitarian Universalist congregations and communities. (Emphasis mine.)

In my report to the General Assembly in June, I said: "... the need to recognize that covenant is both a noun and a verb. Too often, I see congregational leaders speak of covenant only in the context of controlling unhealthy behaviors rather than an expression of how we manifest our love for one another and the world. Covenant is both the commitment and the means to practice engagement in community. It is both a noun – the promise itself – and a verb – the practice that manifests the promise. It is the collective commitment to and practices of religious community that we embrace when we say we are a covenantal faith tradition rather than a creedal one. Covenanting, the gerund, must be intentional if we are to counter the forces of individual isolation and institutional drift.

"We need to explore over the next months how we might change the conversation from membership to mutual covenant. What we have seen as we discussed emerging congregations and covenanting communities over the past year is that the practice of covenanting has energized some groups that appeared to be isolated and static. Let's imagine, rather than signing the book, people entered and were welcomed into covenant that could be renewed periodically. Imagine if congregations entered and were welcomed into covenant with the larger association that would be renewed periodically. Perhaps this is an approach that would energize our movement and attract individuals who are increasingly uninterested in membership in yet another

organization, but desire to get and stay connected, to probe for and express affiliation. Perhaps this process of covenanting is an activating impulse that connects our personal commitments in community, drawing individuals together to co-create a world of more love, justice, and peace.”

I am asking the board to consider how we might imagine moving from the notion of membership to one of covenant. I am organizing a task force, convened by the Rev. Dr. Susan Ritchie, to take up this initiative and report to the board from time to time on the issues and opportunities such a move away from membership to one of covenanting might evoke. Susan will organize a group to gather staff and stakeholders input. I anticipate introducing the concept at GA Columbus in the General Session and having the task force conduct a workshop to introduce the concept and gather feedback.

Delegate Scholarships - Our Ends 1.3 and 1.4 state: *Congregations and communities are intentionally inclusive, multigenerational and multicultural. And, Congregations and communities engage in partnerships to counter systems of power, privilege and oppression.* (Emphasis mine.)

Also, in my report to the General Assembly, I raised the issue of establishing a pilot program to provide financial assistance to support delegates to General Assembly in Columbus in 2016. Encouraging the delegate body, via scholarships, to become more diverse will create movement toward meeting Ends 1.3 and 1.4.

My report said: “...the challenge of making GA more inclusive and financially accessible comes up over and over in linkage conversations and surveys. I propose creating a pilot scholarship program for the General Assembly in Columbus, OH in 2016. The objective of the project would be to attract traditionally under-represented constituencies as delegates that would otherwise not be asked or able to attend. Partnering with the GA Planning Committee, we would expect to increase the number of delegates by ten percent over our current ad hoc approach. This pilot scholarship program will be partially funded by a special collection at GA on Saturday that would provide seed money to jump-start the pilot for 2016. Additionally, we would engage the Stewardship and Development staff to ensure the special collection is appropriately monitored to ensure donors’ intentions are honored. If the pilot meets the objectives, then we would make these scholarship funds part of the governance budget in future years.

“The program imagines that congregations who participate would seek to select youth, young adult, people of color, and other historically marginalized people to represent those congregations at GA 2016. The registration fee would be born by the pilot program, and the congregation would be expected to underwrite some of the travel expenses in conjunction with other funding sources available in districts and regions. There would be pre-GA web meetings to prepare these delegates for their responsibilities, orient them to the process, and support them during GA. There would be post-GA web meetings and surveys to assess the success of the program in targeting a different demographic to the delegate body and congregations who have not sent delegates in recent years.”

The special collection at GA raised \$18,289. Denny Davidoff has generously offered to contribute up to \$5000, through the Jerry and Denny Davidoff Fund for Lay Leadership, to match additional funds that members of the UUA Board contribute in support of this program. You have all received an email from me asking for your support. With Board support and Davidoff Fund support, we would increase our available funds to \$28,000 for scholarships. That amount leveraged with GAPC, regional, and other sources of scholarship funds will enable us to support and send delegates that move us toward a more diverse delegate body that is *intentionally inclusive, multigenerational and multicultural* that will lead us to *counter systems of power, privilege and oppression*.

I have asked Vice Moderator Susan Weaver to work with the GAPC, GA Conference Services, and the DPA to develop the process of nomination, registration, and reimbursement.

Appendix 1:

- Visioning
 - That leads to,
- Policy Making
 - Should be at the forefront of the board's work.
- Stewardship
 - Board holds the congregation's assets in trust, including moral, brand, reputation, and other intangible assets.
- Sponsorship
 - Board should collectively be among the most generous supporters of the congregation with both time and money.
- Advocacy
 - Represents interests of the congregation as an institution both to its own members and, even more importantly, to the wider community.
- Consultancy
 - Board members are available to the staff – *at the staff's invitation* – to provide counsel and encouragement from their particular areas of expertise.

Source: Moderator's presentation from *Governance as a Spiritual Practice* workshops, 2015