

## UUA Board of Trustees Annual Report 2018-2019

In 2017, our report concluded with these words:

“We are embarking on a new way of living out our Unitarian Universalist values in practicing governance from our minds and hearts. We invite you, our sources of Authority and Accountability, to join us as we know that All Are Called to support our faith as Unitarian Universalists.”

That journey continues, and we continue to urge you all to join with us in the power of we, to faithfully revision, redesign, and reconstruct our Unitarian Universalist faith and the larger Unitarian Universalist community.

And again, we mourn the death of a board member, Dick Jackie, who served a quiet, thoughtful role. It would be easy—and an error—to overlook his meaningful participation and sometimes powerful commentary. We miss him. And we grieve for the resignations of both Christina Rivera and Tim Atkins during this year. We recognize that Christina stepped down because of the continuing abuse and threats by anonymous cowards who embody the worst of white supremacist culture within our movement, and we particularly honor her steadfast service in the face of it, serving our faith for years. We recognize and honor that Tim stepped down because he had come to a place where he could no longer serve. Board work is demanding, and truly does demand personal sacrifices of all who serve.

As in recent years, this year has been demanding and challenging.

The Board, the Co-Moderators, the President and the senior staff have worked hard to build a new and shared culture of holding one vision of the faith and its mission together, and of working together to move us towards the Beloved Community we aspire to. We believe we have made excellent progress in creating a healthy, trusting, and trustworthy collaborative culture between the Administration and the Board. This is culture-building, norm-constructing work—not loud or public work—but we believe that it will serve Unitarian Universalism well in the long term. Grateful for the continuing work of the Commission on Institutional Change, we continue to listen, learn, and re-engage with our historical failings and failures, attempting to understand how we can undertake the work of reconstruction and reconciliation, and to see how our systems have failed us repeatedly, so that we can learn and take measures to help ensure that we do not repeat the grievous and lamentable failings of our past. And we know that this work will not be done quickly. The Board has committed, and continues to commit to doing this work, and to not let inevitable crises and other urgent needs distract us. We commit to continuing this work knowing that together we are capable of doing more than one thing at a time.

We have reaffirmed our working in shared leadership and the shared facilitation of Board meetings and General Sessions at General Assembly. We have learned from our own, inevitable mistakes, and continue to revise how we make decisions in ways that encourage all voices to be fully heard and respected, while also valuing other important democratic values—that decisions are made, that they are fair and just, and that the mechanisms we use do not unjustly empower any group or individual to foreordain outcomes.

Throughout 2018 and into 2019, we struggled with the process of our Moderator search process and its results; receiving the report of the Moderator Search Committee that they had no candidate(s) to offer to the Board for nomination. Much time and effort has gone into trying to

understand this; we concluded that the expectations (official and historical) had grown beyond the capacity of all but a very few people; an unpaid volunteer position that demands a sometimes full-time commitment and has come to expect the sacrifice of so many additional weekends and evenings for various significant social and ceremonial occasions is a filter that does not encourage many to volunteer. This is coupled with the intense and demanding nature of the responsibilities set forth in our bylaws and rules of moderating the Board meetings and running General Assembly's sessions. In a time when trustees of the Board are finding that they are called to serve as many hours a week as might have been called for in a month, in the past, the demands placed on the role of moderator are daunting.

In response, we proposed amendments to the Bylaws (passed last year) that explicitly permit for the election of co-moderators, dramatically revised the job description for the position, and established a carefully crafted policy that permits the association to recognize the value of lost income while serving as moderator, and to reimburse that as an expense. We believe that this should help expand the pool of those willing to consider serving the association in the role of moderator.

The position of Moderator will fall open at the close of General Assembly. The Board, with its new members, will convene immediately after General Assembly to elect its officers and to consider, discuss, and decide whether to implement the existing plan to re-appoint our current co-moderators to serve for one additional year, until an election for moderator can be held at General Assembly 2020, in Providence.

Building on the Board's work from last year, and listening to the reports of the Commission on Institutional Change we continue to revise policy and to offer Bylaw revisions that we believe will allow us all to reshape Unitarian Universalism and make us able to respond more nimbly to the challenges before us. The Board recognizes that its role is to act as and on behalf of the Assembly between General Assemblies, and more than ever we are committed to both operating as, and on behalf of the Power of We.

We recommit ourselves to that greater We, and as we did last year we affirm that all of us are called to serve our Unitarian Universalist faith. We are grateful for the opportunity, and look forward to serving it with all of you in the coming year.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Patrick McLaughlin

Secretary of the Association

Board of Trustees

Unitarian Universalist Association