

Memorandum

To: UUA Board of Trustees
Subject: President's Report
From: Peter Morales
Date: April 12, 2016



This report highlights topics that are not covered in other parts of the agenda or in other reports.

Multi Faith Outreach

I am pleased to report significant progress in this area. We steadily building additional partnerships. In particular, we are about to finalize an agreement to work with Harvard Divinity School students (soon to be graduates) Casper ter Kuile and Angie Thurston, who have focused on the topic of the changing religious landscape. You can see two of their reports at howwegather.org. They will take over the staffing of our interfaith effort with the financial support of the Fetzer Institute and will be housed at Harvard Divinity School. A planning meeting will be held at HDS in May. Larger gatherings of religious innovators and supporting denominations are being planned for this winter.

Finding Our Way Home

This annual gathering of ministers, seminarians and religious professionals of color took place last month in Philadelphia. What is significant is that more than 90 people took part, by far the largest gathering of UU religious professionals of color ever. (This is in spite of the fact that a number of prominent ministers were not able to attend). We are entering a new era in the ethnic and racial diversity of our ministry. The rising number of people of color, combined with the record number of retirements, is creating a time of unprecedented opportunity.

Ministerial Transition

We are in the midst of a generational shift in our ordained ministry. We currently do not have enough minister to fill all the open positions in parish ministry. The number of ministers retiring this year is currently 59, and the number will certainly go up before GA. We will have averaged 60 retirements a year for the past three years. That is double the average of the previous three years.

Congregations having the most difficulty are those with between 75 and 140 members who are looking for three-quarter or full time ministers. Keith Kron of the Transitions Office and Scott Tayler of Congregational Life are working on a “minister on loan” program.

As of yesterday, we had 66 congregations in search and nine developmental ministries. Fifteen congregations came up without a candidate on the first round. A second round begins next week. Of the 15 who did not find a candidate, 12 had 140 or fewer members.

Membership and congregations

I would like to propose that the Board set aside time at its October meeting to discuss trends in membership in our congregations and developments in UU communities that are not traditional congregations.

