

**DPA General Meeting 6/22/16
GA Columbus OH**

Meeting Attendance:

Ex Officio: Rev. Scott Tayler, DCL

Central East Region

- Dennis Wellnitz
- Incoming, Laura Conkle (Advisory Council)
- MNY: Mia Morse
- OMD: Matt Alspaugh
- SLD: Jeff Donahue (Vice-President and Acting President)

MidAmerica

- Eric Huffer
- Douglas Cauble

New England Region

- Ballou-Channing District
 - Mary Lu Love (Treasurer)
- Northern New England District
 - Dana Baron
- Clara Barton District
 - Bill Young
- Mass Bay
 - Heather Concannon

Pacific West Region

- Mountain Desert District
 - Victor Ashear (Secretary)
- Pacific Northwest District
 - Hayden Nevill
- Pacific Southwest District
 - Jim Merrill
- Pacific Central District
 - Steve Burns

Southern Region

- Incoming:
 - Peter Kandis
 - Margie Manning

Hayden Nevill led worship at 8:45 am.

Reports From Regions:

Central East Region. CER District Assemblies have voted to permit dissolution, but there are still some legal steps that need to be completed. New regional lead for region is Rev. Megan Foley. Metro NY was the last to meet and vote to dissolve. Jim Key was invited to speak to the JPD delegates before the vote to affirm the authority of the JPD Board to dissolve the District on such terms and timeline as the District Board of Directors and the UUA agree.

Southern Region Report. Regional programs including leadership schools are well attended. An element of the dissolution of the middle judicatory of the Southern Region was creation of a financial review team, which oversaw the successful transfer of the financial assets of the four districts to the trusteeship of our Association. Post dissolution a small subset of top district leadership was chosen to populate the Southern Regional Elder Development (RED) team. Congregational Life Staff (CLS) insisted on facilitating RED team meetings. It has not gone well. It is a deep disappointment that there has been no progress in collaboration between the CLS and the RED team to support congregations via clusters.

Pacific West Region. Now have coordinated regional financing. All districts are maintaining Chalice Lighters. PCD lost money on its last assembly. Lay leadership coordinates with CL staff in PCD. In MDD the board is helping with Generosity Network. MDD is also connecting with congregations by phone and planning statewide web conferencing among congregational presidents. PSWD working to build a stronger relationship with Camp de Benneville. In PNW one-day assembly didn't work out. Also need to rely on CL staff for planning meetings in the future to insure success.

MidAmerica. Awesome assembly; support of Muslim community. Board meets 3X year in different parts of region. Met with Imams and provided support. 13 states in solidarity with Muslim community. Working on infrastructure converting to a region. What purpose will we serve? "Storytellers." Hear and share stories with congregations.

New England District. Now about to sign MOU to regionalize. 2 districts will dissolve and 2 will remain. NNE will not dissolve. It will serve as a connection to congregations. Have asked congregations for feedback. Did paring of congregations. Clara Barton District Board decided to dissolve. Mass Bay District also voted to dissolve feeling there was no need for district. Question about how endowments to be spent; deciding to share money across region. BCD plans to continue as a district. Congregations in close proximity meet together.

GA Update:

Ila KLion. Safe space for LGBTQ. Event is about social justice. Service tomorrow night includes a sermon. Westboro Baptist group will be protesting us in Columbus. Black Lives Collective will do closing. UUA is trying to be more purposed with themes with GA. Public Witness: Nora Rasman. Event opens with a band. Several speakers including Rev. Morales. People in OH will speak about their action work. Speaker from NC NAACP to end.

The Art of Hosting (How to facilitate a group).

Rev. Renee Ruchotzke. & Jeff Donohue: Theological view of this. Each of us has experience and reason plus interaction with others. Discernment as a group changes us especially if we are in covenant. It can enrich us; process theology. Together we discern the “will of God.” Collective wisdom. Like “appreciate inquiry,” “world café,” covenant groups and other methods. When people are given an opportunity to participate early on they are likely to stay engaged. Easiest to conduct in small groups. Acknowledging that each has a different perspective. You are there to listen attentively. Hosts rather than facilitators; at least 2. Hosts prepare key questions for the groups to consider. “Harvesting” is collecting information for use. Outcomes can be very broad and several things can be included. We as lay leaders will be needed to host conversations and create space. Four assumptions these are right the people, this is the right time, right result and when it’s over, it’s over. “Circle practice: Questions are prepared. People asked to work in circles. Meaningful objects are placed in the space. Check in, covenant, shared leadership, reliance upon the wholeness of the group (finding the balance), process monitor, use of the talking stick, people are encouraged to slow down e.g. with a chime, speak without interruption. One person at each table is the host. People move from table to table to answer different questions. The host tries to make sense of all that comes out of conversations. “Open space:” each person puts an idea on the board or market place. Then groups go to the table representing a particular idea of their choice. People at the margins have a voice. Can be a bumblebee or a butterfly. Bumblebee jumps from table to table. Butterfly sits and reflects quietly. artofhosting.org website. Used in Columbus effectively to develop solutions to homelessness. One way to start is to create the space and promoting intentionality and being present. Could be used in pieces or at a board retreat. For chaos use “open space,” if you have an idea use “world café,” for finishing use “circles.”

Future of the DPA

Hayden Nevill: Mission and Vision. A group (including Matt, Mia, Eric, Scott and Victor) met after the DPA Boston meeting where the mission statement was drafted to consolidate the results of the discussions on the future of the DPA. Here it is:

The mission of the DPA is to support geographically-affiliated leadership volunteers by providing a learning environment and maintaining institutional knowledge, and to support the Director of Congregational Life in designing geographically-appropriate structures for the delivery of UUA services.

Our vision is a well-structured system for delivery of UUA services that accounts for geographic diversity.

MaryLu asked if the mission statement includes the back and forth. Steve mentioned that geography is emphasized but wondered if it is clearly stated. Scott asks who are included; that is not part of the mission statement. “Geographically based leadership” was proposed language by Dana. Jeff is bothered the emphasis on geography. If we use the name Regional Leaders Group geography is implied. Jim likes the emphasis on the word “geographical” because it implies culture. Bill points out that the structures are likely to change over the next few years. Who will we be in a few years? Elected leadership will disappear. How will leaders be identified? Matt asks what is our uniqueness? This body is unique; so place,

geography is unique. Dana states the structures will be in transition but we want to help the UUA transition to Regionalization. What is meant by “structures?” Eric points out that we need to accept there are different structures in each region. Jim says we don’t address delivery of service but rather mutual education. Steve reminded us of our role as architects Thus our roles are temporary. Scott says we are trying to do two things; support Scott and support each other. We also need to wrestle with membership. Also who gets the bill asks Jim. There was discussion as to where this group should continue? Dennis stated that we need to exist as a democratic voice. Dana says we need to grapple with membership.

After Lunch: We need to focus now on who is to be part of this group in the future. Jim thought each region could decide who to send and how. Eric says we need to be advocates and representatives for our areas but also looking to the common good. Pete wonders if we need to settle on the vision before the membership. Scott says we have a sense of what (support of Scott and support of each other) so we need to look at membership now. Pete asks where the money come from. Dennis says JPD still has a concern about loss of balance without districts; their fear is that the UUA will become more distant from congregations; need to keep a voice. MaryLu we no longer do governance but we do still provide advocacy. Scott says it has been decided that DPA no longer will be based in governance. At some point the Advisory Council will take over the DPA role. Jeff says it would be best to focus upon the next 2-3 years. Dana asks who will pay for the meetings? Scott and MaryLu will work on the financing of the group going forward. Some of the current participants are Advisory Council members and others are from boards or former boards. Hayden promotes that each region send your own representatives. Matt thinks reps need to participate for more than a year. Eric thinks we can put the issue of membership forward. Dennis recalls that in 2010 the question was asked as to whether we need a middle adjudicatory body. But there was a cost saving with regionalization. Steve asks if we should invite CLF staff to this meeting? Dana is interested in maintaining contact though keeping his district. Jeff thinks we need to narrow the discussion to the next 2 years. The bill for costs would go to the region or district. Laura thinks about a 2-year term. Scott states he is the decider as to who attends in the South and CE. Contested by Dennis: Central East Districts still exist and CERG Transition Team made final selection considering Scott’s input, but then all District Presidents (except SLD) decided to attend this meeting, as the meeting invitation was unclear. Hayden suggests the name change to Regional Leaders Group. Scott recalls that it was decided that each Region would send 2 reps except for PWR.

Generosity Network: Vail Weller, et al.

APF and Gift are primary source of UUA funding; 6 million a year. Vail thanks us for our volunteerism. GN works with UUA Board. Some congregations are behind in payments amounting to \$1 million. We are even with last year. We are at 93% of full fair share. 36 congregations have paid extra. Elisabeth now works directly with congregations to build relationships and trust. Generosity Network is a group of volunteers that make calls to congregations about APF/GIFT. Board established a task force to address “What is the best way to fund the UUA?” Funding must come from the membership. The task force is to finish its work in November. UUA in reality is not asking for more money (percentage of budgets) than in the past. We have had a drop in attainment in the past few years. We have dropped from 84% to 72% over the past few years. We need to try to restore level of

giving. GIFT approach is better than APF. GIFT is likely to be the future of giving. Not aiming to get more total income. 75% of congregations will have to increase their giving with GIFT. We could ask less if all contributed fair share. Some congregations are complaining about the change to GIFT. Stewardship will work with PWR about district dues. Implementation is expected in 7/17.

CL Update: Scott Tayler.

Areas to cover are staff changes, training, cross-departmental, emerging trends. New staff has resulted in teams. Nine new staff; but need to integrate them. There are more qualified applicants now.

Fruits and gifts of the addition of specialization, e.g. youth, safety, etc. There is more flexibility in the work for staff, "cross team." Transitions roundtable for congregational transitions; one person to address the whole transition. Aligning safety practices. On-line presence e.g. leadership school classes available for all regions. Asking staff to look for collaboration across regions, e.g. Black Lives Matter movement and two media specialists are to work across regions.

Training is being provided to CL staff. Our staff do 19 different tasks, on-line learning, conflict, design thinking, inter-cultural competency. Staff will need to say no to some requests.

Regionalization allows close working with other UUA depts.; stewardship, good officer work (supporting a system), faith development Renaissance Mods., youth. The future: What is our vision of assemblies? What purpose do they serve? On line sharing? Multisite and clustering. Measurement of impact? Ministry of storytelling? How wide to share stories. Multicultural and BLM movement.

Service Opportunities:

Marcia Bowman. Constantly looking for volunteers to fill positions. Members of this group will be looked upon favorably by the UUA Board and usually elected by proclamation. Seeking diversity Seeking diverse candidates for these leadership positions, to better reflect our membership. Nominations Committee and Appointments Committees, Open UUA, Socially Responsible Investing, Social Witness, Journey Towards Wholeness, Audit Committee seeking membership.

EqUual Access (AIM):

Suzanne Fast. Working for disability rights and getting UUs out in the community. Help to move people into the socialization of those with disabilities. AIM is seeking ambassadors for AIM. Some with disabilities are struggling with or giving up on their congregations. Some in frustration may sound strident or may seem culturally deviant from the norms. Question, "Are we unsafe or just uncomfortable with people who are different?" Hearing loss is the biggest by far disability issue in congregations. Reserve the elevators at GA for wheel chairs and maintain an attitude of inclusion.

Respectfully submitted,
Victor Ashear, Secretary

