

Thomas Jefferson District Executive Report

Mid-Year Report 2009-2010

As I reflect on the past six months, what immediately comes to mind is what a gift it is to work for an organization that understands and supports people in their lives. Thank you for all of your support during what has been a challenging personal time for me.

After the Rev. Peter Morales took office as UUA President, he promoted the Rev. Harlan Limpert to the position of Vice-President of Ministries and Congregational Support. Rather than refill his position as Director of Congregational Life, Harlan appointed five regional lead district staff people on a temporary basis (12-18 months) to help coordinate and communicate with other district staff. I was selected to serve in that capacity for the Southland Region, comprised of TJD, Florida, Mid-South and the Southwestern Conference. Although it has added some additional responsibilities to my work-load, it does not drastically impact my time and availability for the TJD. Sue Sinnamon and I have been working closely to re-allocate responsibilities to see that the TJD is not negatively impacted. Instead, it has allowed us to begin to envision what services could be offered on a regional basis or offered more effectively by another district staff person in the region. In January, we held a regional training for congregational consultants in the four districts. Forty people from the four districts participated, including five from the TJD, Jim, Key, Peter Kandis, Tandy Scheffler, and Kathleen Carpenter as consultants and Sue Sinnamon as staff. Through this kind of cooperative activity, we are able to offer higher quality services to our congregations.

Goal 1: Training and Programming

We will provide a wide-range of effective and geographically-accessible training opportunities and programming for our member congregations within the Thomas Jefferson District focused on Unitarian Universalist faith development, leadership development, congregational health, social justice, and stewardship.

Completed Leadership Development Opportunities

Southland UU Leadership Experience, July 19-24, 2009, The Mountain

This was the first truly cooperative, four-district leadership school. All seven staff of the four districts served as the faculty for the school and partnered with The Mountain for facilities. Peter Kandis has been asked to serve as dean of the 2011 Leadership School at The Mountain that will also serve the four districts.

Arts and Social Change Institute, August 27-Sept. 1, 2009, The Mountain

We offered two scholarships for TJD young adults to attend this intensive workshop led by Holly Near at The Mountain. The young adult participation was a significant benefit to the success of this Institute. We are offering two more scholarships for young adults to attend the second Arts and Social Change Institute with singer, song-writer, Ysaye Barnwell, Building Vocal Community® Finding Your Voice.

Leaders Convo, "A Way to Start a Year", September 19, 2009

In Charlotte this year, we offered the first annual gathering of congregational presidents, RE staff and chairs, and administrators. In this day-long program, we provided opportunities for people to get to know each other and learn to work across congregations in effective ways. Over half of the TJD congregations were represented, which allowed them to get to know district staff and learn about how the district can help them be successful in their roles.

Pastoral Care Associates Training

First UU Church of Richmond offered this district-wide training at Williamsburg UU to help congregations develop a lay pastoral care associated program within their congregations.

Southern Cluster Workshop, January 16, 2010, Bluffton, SC

This workshop, led by the Rev. Clark Olsen, focused our southern-most congregations on how they can effectively work together to live their covenant as UU congregations. As a result, a leadership team has developed to coordinate Southern Cluster cooperation and activities.

Upcoming 2010 Leadership Development Opportunities

- Spring 2010 Leadership Development Webinar Series, starting February 3, 2010
- Spring Faith Development Training at Haw River, March 12-14, 2010, focusing on adult faith development and campus ministry
- 2010 Annual Meeting, April 30-May 2, at Penn Center, St. Helena's Island, SC
- Southland UU Leadership Experience, August 8-13, 2010 at The Mountain
- Goldmine Leadership Development Training for Youth, August 1-7, 2010, Oak Ridge, TN

Plans still in development for 2010-2011

A convocation of TJD's Leadership Congregations

The TJD staff has developed a set of criteria to identify TJD's leadership congregations. These criteria include consistent and sustained growth, Fair Share giver, strong leadership (professional and lay), strong religious education program, willingness to seek consultation outside the congregation, and willingness to share their expertise with other congregations, and involvement with the district. Using these criteria, we have identified 10 leadership congregations and plan to invite them to a convocation next year. The focus on the convocation will be on how to make them even stronger and how to strength other congregations in the districts. This effort is consistent with Peter Morales vision related to growth and we hope to have him join us for this event.

Policy Governance Workshop: A gathering for congregations in or moving toward policy-type governance

We have a number of congregations using policy-type governance or moving toward this form of governance. This workshop will bring together those congregations to learn from each other about successful policy-type governance implementation.

GA 2011

With GA 2011 in Charlotte, we are beginning to work with the GA Planning Committee. In January, the GA Planning Committee held a gathering for congregations interested in working on GA. We had good representation from a number of congregations throughout the district. We are in the process of nominating a person from the TJD to serve in the capacity of District Coordinator for GA. That person will join the GA Planning Committee at GA 2010 in Minneapolis and work to identify and lead the local volunteers to make GA 2011 a successful experience for all participants.

Goal 2: Right Relations

We will continually work toward living in right relations with each other by striving to transform the district and assisting its member congregations in living their covenant to each other and toward becoming anti-racist, anti-oppressive, multigenerational and multicultural communities.

National Equality March, October 12, 2009

When The National Equality March was announced, I challenged our congregations to put their faith into practice by sending 10% of their members to the March. Although we didn't reach that goal, over half of the TJD congregations sent representatives to the March. The TJD had approximately 450-500 participants, the largest representation from any district! East Tennessee (see photo) congregations organized a bus-load of over 40 participants, who spent many-long hours on the road to stand-up for their faith. The National Equality March was a huge success and is credited with pushing the Obama administration to live up to its campaign promises to end discrimination against gay, lesbian and bi-sexual people.



2010 AR conference, February 5-6, 2010, Richmond, VA

First UU Richmond worked in partnership with the TJD to plan and organize an incredible anti-racism conference. It already had the largest registration of any AR conference in recent years. Unfortunately, this conference had to be cancelled due to weather concerns. We are planning to reschedule it for the Fall 2010.

Social justice coordinator

At the Fall 2009 Board meeting, the TJD Board authorized the hiring of a half-time social justice coordinator. I am happy to announce that after an extensive search, I have hired Donna Sequeira from Williamsburg, VA. Donna has an M. Div. from Starr King School for the Ministry and has extensive experience in community organizing, training, public speaking, fundraising, and leadership development. She has strong technical skills and is well-equipped to help us offer more virtual training opportunities

for our congregations as well as, teach our congregations about effective online organizing techniques. Donna has a deep understanding of the spiritual imperative of social justice work and can effectively communicate that to others. I am very excited to have Donna join our team.

TJD Anti-racism Re-Envisioning Task Force

The TJD Anti-racism Re-Envisioning Task Force was commissioned in the Spring of 2008 by the TJD Board. For a variety of reasons, including the shooting in Knoxville, the task force did not get started until almost a year later. Since then, they have been exploring the history of anti-racism work in the TJD and will use that to create a vision for the future. Because of scheduling issues, this task force has not met as regularly as we had hoped (including a meeting that was to be held in conjunction with the cancelled Richmond AR Conference. However, the Social Justice Coordinator will provide staff support to this task force and we are confident that we will have a report to the board by no later than the August 2010 Board retreat.

Goal 3: Transitions

We will provide consultation services to member congregations to assist them in assuring successful searches and transitions of ministers and other religious professionals.

Ministerial Settlement Reps

The Rev. Nan White, UU Fellowship of Beaufort, has recently been appointed to replace the Rev. Jennifer Slade as Ministerial Settlement Representative for the TJD. Nan will work with the Rev. Jacqueline Luck to support our congregations in ministerial transition.

I have also appointed Robert E. Smith to the position of Part-time Settlement Coordinator. Robert E. will work with congregations who are seeking part-time ministry. This is the first time, we have had someone to work in this capacity and we are excited to be able to offer this service to our smaller congregations.

Goal 4: Growth

We will grow membership within existing congregations and support new congregations to, at a minimum, keep pace with the population increases in our region.

The TJD added 45 new members in 2009 for a total of 10,700 (0.42%). Although this is slower growth than we have had in recent years, we know that a number of congregations worked hard this year to clean-up their membership rolls. UU Fellowship of Winston-Salem and Community Church of Chapel Hill, UU added the most members (23 and 22 respectively). UUs of Transylvania County (Brevard, NC) has shown the highest growth over the past eight years, growing from 58 members in 2003 to 157 in 2010. 55% of our congregations added members in 2009, 37% lost members, and 7% stayed the same.

Goal 5: Lifespan Faith Development

We will develop strong lifespan faith development programs throughout the district with a special focus on programming for youth, young adult and campus ministry.

Our Whole Lives, August 21-23, 2009, Atlanta, GA

A successful training for Owl teachers from around the TJ and Mid-South Districts was offered this summer.

Chaplaincy for Youth Training, November 13-15, 2009, Williamsburg, VA

In conjunction with the Pastoral Care Training in Williamsburg, we offered a chaplaincy for youth training. Fifteen youth from a variety of congregations were trained.

Upcoming

- Spring Faith Development Training at Haw River, March 12-14, 2010, focusing on adult faith development and campus ministry
- Goldmine Leadership Development Training for Youth, August 1-7, 2010, Oak Ridge, TN

Goal 6: Stewardship

We will be good stewards of financial and human resources, both paid and volunteer, while educating congregations about the benefits of generosity and collaboration.

Chalice Lighters Update

The Chalice Lighters Committee has struggled over the past couple of years with a couple changes in leadership. Regina Largent, Richmond, was unable to fulfill her term as chair. Katie Miller, Aiken, took over as chair and has also now resigned. I have just approached Regina Largent to reassume her role as chair and she has graciously accepted. Regina's life circumstances have changed and she is able and willing to fulfill her responsibilities as chair. I am confident she will do a fabulous job and get the CL Committee back on track.

We only had 1 call in 2008-2009, a split call, for Westside UU in Tennessee for a new Director of Religious Education for their rapidly growing RE program and for All Souls Waccamaw in South Carolina for furnishings for their newly acquired building. This has allowed both to grow their congregations in very different but very important ways. The committee asked the district Chalice Lighters to double their contributions because there had been only one call all year. We asked for \$39,000 we were delighted that the call raised more than we asked for, even in the difficult times we see with this current economy.

We started 2009-2010 with Call #150 for Aiken UU Church in South Carolina for the hiring of their first part time minister. That call raised just above the \$28,000 that the Aiken UU Church requested. They are in the process of accepting applications for that position.

We are currently in the process of our 2nd call of 2009-2010, call #151. We have a meeting on Tuesday, February 9, 2010, to make a decision made and get this call in the mail by spring.

Knoxville Area Relief Fund

Almost 16 months ago, the Thomas Jefferson District and the UUA established the Knoxville Area Relief Fund (KARF). In the course of that time, the UUA received donations of \$208,447 and the congregations

received direct donations of \$48,315, resulting in total donations to the fund of \$256,762. Of that total, \$181,562 was distributed as follows:

Direct Victim Assistance	101,556
Pastoral Care Support	29,371
Security enhancements	14,200
Trauma Support	11,382
TJD support services	10,422
RE support – designated gift	10,000
Misc Expenses	3,840
Supplies	790

The remaining balance of \$75,338 was distributed to TVUUC and Westside based on a percentage of their 2009 certified membership. Each congregation is now in a better position to manage these funds internally and is using them to further the healing process and to help each congregation grow stronger.

Budget

Even in challenging financial times, the 2009 revenue and expenses are on track at this point in the fiscal year. We expect to finish the year well within our 2010 budget.

Transfer of Bookkeeping Responsibilities

As part of our move to policy-type governance, I plan to hire a bookkeeper to transfer bookkeeping responsibilities from our incredible volunteer, Cyndy Bailes, to a paid contractor, effective July 2010. As part of this transition, we are writing financial management policies and procedures to assure that appropriate controls are in place for this new process. At the same time, I look forward to working with the Board to redefine roles of the Treasurer and Finance Committee.

Respectively Submitted,

Annette Marquis
District Executive
Thomas Jefferson District

February 5, 2010