

Report to the TJ District Board
Rev. Jake Bohstedt Morrill, UUA Trustee
April 28, 2010

Individual Activity

In late September, the TJ District Board appointed me to fulfill the current term of the UUA Trustee from our District. Since then, I have attended Board meetings in October, January, and April. Serving on the Linkage Working Group and the Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression/Multi-cultural Team—now called the Right Relationship Committee—has meant many phone calls and behind-the-scenes work. In addition, a comprehensive “Transforming Governance” motion and accompanying language in late winter took a fair amount of effort. Engaging constituents, too, has been part of this work. Currently, my focus is in helping secure away-from-Boston sites and in helping define standards for these sites. Helping the wider movement and the Board engage with each other is a priority for me. I believe I have represented our District as a voice for practicing Policy Governance with integrity, for working with an AR/AO/MC perspective, and with a bias for engaging the transformation that is the work before us all right now. As a Parish Minister and the father of young kids, our District has lost the high in-person engagement with District congregations that it enjoyed, and that I greatly admired, in the tenure of Anna Olsen. But I’m proud of my work for the Association so far, and am grateful for the opportunity to serve.

UUA Board news

Here are five important points for leaders to know:

1. The practice of Policy Governance continues to clarify accountability and authority throughout our Association. It is a culture change, which is challenging. But because it provides the tools for transparent, values-based decision-making, it provides the tools for transformational leadership. I have seen this in the work of both the Association’s Board and the District’s Board.
2. In February, propelled by the Fifth Principle Task Force and the November meeting with the District Presidents’ Association, the UUA Board passed a “transforming governance” motion, which laid out a plan with four meaningful steps: shrinking the UUA Board; engaging District leaders at this year’s General Assembly in a conversation about governance; engaging our congregations by holding some meetings outside of Boston; and engaging youth, young adults, and historically marginalized communities in the governance transformation. Since February, the Board has made progress toward each of these. Change is afoot. You will not be surprised that TJD Board President Jim Key is regularly praised as a leader among leaders, and a “key” ally in these efforts (pun fully intended).
3. The Board is engaging 100 congregations this past winter and spring in "linkage conversation" to learn what healthy relationships between the Board and Member Congregations could be like.
4. Ministerial Credentialing is under review. You can read an interim report on the UUA website. No substantial changes have yet been proposed, but in a movement which upholds the vision of Beloved Community, the dearth of clergy of color is distressing.
5. Arizona’s recent legalization of racial profiling has brought into question whether holding General Assembly in Phoenix in 2012 is consistent with our values. The conversation is alive, and I’m curious to hear people’s thoughts.