

East Shore Unitarian Universalist Church
Kirtland, Ohio
Minister's Report to the Board of Trustees
April 11, 2020

Dear Members of the Board,

On Saturday, March 14, at an emergency meeting, you decided to close East Shore for the following few weeks in response to the COVID-19 crisis and the declaration of a state of emergency by the governor of Ohio. Everything from that moment on changed, including the format I will use for my report. At least for the time being. The learning curve has been steep, as we have been scrambling to figure out how to lead a gathering group when we can no longer gather physically. I've had to learn how to be a filmmaker, among many other things. Following are some of the areas in which I have focused my attention.

Live Worship Services

3/1 "This Too Shall Pass," with Mark Guizlo (which turned out to be remarkably prescient)

3/4 First Wednesday Night "Words," a Kirtland Interfaith Adult Religious Education class led by Seth Bryant of the Kirtland Temple, and hosted at East Shore

3/8 "Kielbasa Tamales," with generous help from Terry DeTar and Bree Byrd (I am so glad the last thing we did together in person was to share a meal)

Online Services

3/15 "The Wisdom of Children," with Halcyon Domanski

3/22 "Mother Necessity," with Halcyon Domanski

3/29 "Greeting Compassion and Wisdom," with Rev. Emily DeTar of the UU congregation in Staten Island NY

We started off doing everything exclusively on Facebook Live, basically doing all of the liturgy we had planned in advance for that Sunday, minus the music, which would have been scrambled. After that, we moved to starting the service (sounding the singing bowl through joys and cares) with Facebook Live, then inviting everyone to view the rest of the service through a YouTube playlist. There were glitches, but it seems like by the fourth Sunday, everyone was in the swing of things, and the process seems to be working, and well appreciated.

Halcyon and I will be working on all of the Sunday services through the end of the church year, as planned, with the exception of next Sunday, 4/19, when members of the Worship Arts Team will be collaborating. Thank you to all of them for being willing to go out on a limb. And thank you to Halcyon, Laura Solomon and Lynne Killgore for lending us their incredible skills of video editing.

One of the unexpected gifts of creating worship with a mix of live and recorded liturgical elements is that time and space don't matter as much. We've been joined so far in worship by Rev. Emily DeTar last Sunday. On Easter, Rev Sally white will be joining us. Both grew up at East Shore, so it's a treat to get to hear from them in a way they'd never be able to do in person.

Kirtland Interfaith Adult Religious Education

3/4 "Words," led by Seth Bryant

3/11 "Glory," led by Rev. Ian Lynch

After the second class, the five ministers of the five involved congregations met with a member of Divine Word, who works as the head of nursing at Cleveland Clinic, who let us know that everything would be shutting down in the state of Ohio. We all agreed that the most important part of the class was meeting together as congregations, and decided then to postpone the rest of the classes until after this crisis is over. When we regroup, we will probably start all over and have all five classes in succession.

Prayer Circle

When we began the prayer circles back at the beginning of 2020, we had planned on having them at 6:15 am once a day for a week, then once a week for a month, then once a month for the remainder of the year. I felt the need to resume weekly gathering at the usual time, via Facebook Live without gathering in person. Others affirmed that they would also benefit from the practice. The response has been incredible. Even though most people don't need to be anywhere so early, our attendance has been around 60 to 70 each time, with more viewing the recording later in the day and week. Some of the sessions have had as many as 200 views, proof that the circle is widening and a particular need is being met.

Beverages and Banter

In an attempt to get people familiar with Zoom meetings in a low-stress environment, and to encourage gathering virtually, I've been scheduling two to three Beverages and Banter per week, and added a session on Sunday morning. The time after the Facebook Live portion of our Sunday Service last week (the first Sunday in April) was a success. There were over 30 devices in the meeting, with well over 40 people checking in.

Furlough and Study Weeks

I was scheduled to take regular furlough week 3/9 to 3/16, but being the first week of the crisis, that couldn't happen, as we were figuring out how to make worship happen online. I was also scheduled to take one of two annual study weeks 3/17 to 3/23, an opportunity to catch up on reading and planning worship for the remainder of the church year. Not only did that not happen, it's become clear that each week worship will develop organically in the week leading up to it.

General

Almost everything that had been on my calendar for the rest of the church year has been cancelled, and the few things outside of East Shore that have been moved to online have been rescheduled for times I can't commit to. Such is life in dangerous times. Summer Institute has been cancelled. General Assembly, so far, seems to be still on, though I have not registered. Even though I had planned on attending in Providence during the last week of June, I'm having a hard time imagining it will still happen.

I have been checking in by phone with members of the congregation as much as possible, though because of time constraints and seemingly endless trouble shooting, not nearly as much as I would like. The people I have reached out to are doing well, despite everything. So far, thankfully, nobody at East Shore has taken ill. We've had a lot of experience over the last few years with multiple deaths in a short period, but we've gotten through them in large part because we have been able to gather and pitch in with memorial services. Let's all hope that the impact on us as a congregation is minimal. If it isn't, I know we'll be able to make it through, because despite everything, we do live into our mission to Love, Revere, Discover and Connect. Even when we can't be together in person.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Denis Letourneau Paul

RE Faith Development Report to the Board

Love, Revere, Discover, Connect

EAST SHORE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

Director of RE Faith Development – Halcyon Domanski

RE Faith Development Chair – Minna Zelch

April 11, 2020

~And how is the congregation?

A lot of things have change and that goes for this report as well.

We have had two class in both COA and RE Faith Development on Zoom. It is becoming apparent that for the children and teens and Adults that being on Zoom for a class is just another school class/meeting to attend. I am now thinking about how I can change that feeling and make it more spiritual for us all. I know for RE/FD it can be done, but am not sure how to with COA.

For other groups we have still yet to meet on Zoom, this will be happening in the week coming up. For Art and Spirituality we are encouraging people to join us in their studio/kitchen table to create art and be together through Zoom. Circle of Mom will probably work, we will just all have to supply our own chocolate and flowers.

At this time Night, Night bag S.J, Projects for RE/FD have been put on hold. We do not have another project lined up at this time and with all the changes I do not know if families have time too. I will be discussing this with the RE/FD team at our next meeting.

I am keeping touch with all of our families by calling and checking in with them. And I have let everyone know that I am always available to talk.

After this board meeting a large group of people will be doing a drive by caravan at Bree's House to wish Caleb a Happy Birthday. This will be a surprise for the whole Byrd household. I am hoping to do more community outreach things like this. It not only brings joy to the person receiving the gesture but joy to those giving it. And we all need more joy right now.

Secret Pen Pal is still happening. I mailed everyone's letters to their homes and then gave everyone their individual pen pal address so that they can still send letters/cards to each other. So each month their should be at least 42 letters arriving at someone's door step.

WORSHIP

Reverend Denis and I have settled on the best way for us to do services on Facebook, YouTube and Zoom. Laura Solomon has joined our editing team as well, THANK YOU LAURA! Each week has become a multigenerational service with the focus being all of us together with love, reverence, discovery and connection.

RE CLASSES OR GROUPS

First Wednesday Night – was a hit for all those who joined

Theme Thursday – I forgot

Circle of Mom – this Thursday

Sunday Classes – are now on Saturday and Sunday after service

OTHER

Monthly staff meeting

Daily meetings with Rev Denis

Board meeting

Chaplain members of the congregation

All the Services

PERSONAL

This will not be happening unless our current situation changes - Halcyon will be of vacation from June 15th to July 5th. For the exception of attending the COA Rehearsal Dinner and COA service on June 20th and 21st.

Membership Committee Report

April 11, 2020

- ⊕ The membership count remains at 155.
- ⊕ New to UU classes are currently suspended. We could investigate whether they could be hosted online if there is demand for that, but we haven't yet heard a need.
- ⊕ The Great Chilly Chili Cook-off was held on February 16, 2020. It was success with 12 total entries and great attendance. Marianne Hawson won the Omnivore category and Mary Mason won the Vegan / Vegetarian category. Each of them received a \$25 grocery gift card as well as bragging rights for their triumph!
- ⊕ The annual Pancake Breakfast is still scheduled for Sunday, June 28, 2020. We would like to avoid cancelling/postponing this until the last possible moment. If it is necessary, we would suggest it be *postponed* and we try to find a Sunday soon after reopening the church for it to occur. We feel that such an event/meal will be a welcome and needed thing when we come out of our solitary existence. We welcome ideas on how to do this if a straight-up traditional pancake breakfast taking up an entire Sunday service would be problematic in any way.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat McGovern, Membership Committee Chair