

President's Notes:

UUA General Assembly: I had the privilege to sit with Rev. Rita's family when all the newly ordained ministers were recognized at the "Service of the Living Tradition"—along with the ministers achieving full fellowship, the newly credentialed Faith Development Directors, ministers completing active service, and honoring those who have died in this last year. It was an impressive ceremony, and Rita was beaming (we all were)!

GA was held in Kansas City, MO—not my favorite city, but being together in one place with 5,000 UUs, sharing worship, deciding the Association's business, picking up pointers at workshops—that was worth it!

The General Assembly was democracy in action. There was a strong attempt to be transparent and welcoming to all, and to be reflective and as transparent as possible about the reasons for actions that we were taking. And the debates around the by-law amendments and resolutions were fascinating—I wished I had paid more attention in my classes on Congressional procedures and tactics! Among our decisions, we resolved to use gender-neutral pronouns ("they/them/their") rather than "his or her" (to recognize that for some of us gender is not binary but a continuum), to grant automatic delegate status for all certified religious educators who employed by their congregation, and to provide a permanent seat on the Board for a Youth Trustee. And we voted to encourage our congregations this year to study/act on "undoing intersectional White supremacy." (https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/proposed_csai_intersectional_white_supremacy_20171228.pdf)

I also had the chance to take in several workshops—on "Cultivating Leadership" (take your time developing the power of spiritual leadership among your congregation), on "Reimagining Sundays" (ever notice how we separate the children off into Sunday school, and then wonder why they have no attachment to our sanctuary when they become young adults?), on "Getting a Grant" (no good bon mots, but a useful orientation to the UU Funding Program), and "Conflict, Covenant, and Community" (the covenant is not a hammer, but an invitation to "lean in" to relation with the other and foster belonging in our diversity).

There's much more to tell, so ask me about it if you are curious. Or go on the UUA website—they have videos and powerpoints of all the main sessions and many of the workshops (<https://www.uua.org/ga/off-site/2018>). Mostly it was just a good opportunity to fall back and reflect on why I am here and what I want to do about it. Next year's GA is in Spokane, WA. Consider going out there, or if that is "a bridge too far," maybe attend all or part online (you can even be an official delegate from off-site). It is time well-spent.