

Notes from Leadership Retreat
8/23-24/2019

Agenda

Friday 6:00-8:30pm

- Welcome and Chalice Lighting: *We are a welcoming people of diverse beliefs who commit to nourish the spirit, broaden the mind, nurture the earth, and build community. May this flame we kindle remind us to strive, today and every day, to love beyond belief.*
- Outline of Retreat
- Improv Games
- Dinner Break
- Small Group Ministry Session
- Closing Reading/Extinguish the Chalice

Saturday 9:00am-2:00pm

- Gathering and Chalice Lighting : *We are a welcoming people of diverse beliefs who commit to nourish the spirit, broaden the mind, nurture the earth, and build community. May this flame we kindle remind us to strive, today and every day, to love beyond belief.*
- Re-cap of Insights from Last Evening
- Calendar of Meetings and Events 2019-2020
- Rethinking Board Leadership: Governance and Ministry
- Stretch break
- Visioning Process, Part 1
 - What has the Fellowship been?
 - What do we want the Fellowship to be?
- Lunch break
- Vision Process, Part 2
 - Resume “What do we want the Fellowship to be?”
 - Resources: Obstacles and Opportunities
 - Next steps?
- Ministry Programing 2019-2020 and projected for 2020-2021
- Closing Reading/Extinguish the Chalice

Friday Evening Notes

- We can create joy, even in silly ways. Joy is like a lubricant; it makes good but hard work palatable and possible
- Longing for comfort and familiarity, for the Fellowship to be what it has been
- Longing for the Fellowship to be “More”: more for those already present, more for those who don’t yet know that we are there for them to join us, more as a partner in the larger community. Acting with and not leading others.
- There is inherent tension here—to be the same and to be different. That is something that needs to be negotiated.
- There is a touch of reluctance to talk about fears or concerns for the Fellowship, even though we are not on firm fiscal ground
- There are always a lot of wants. And there are always less plans and paths to get there. True in many churches and other settings, too. Plans are not as sexy as desire. But without plans, we will not get anywhere. And how to do what is good and also possible requires patience and good stewardship of resources, including the minister, and a willingness to work together in concert.

Saturday Notes

“What do we want the Fellowship to be?” (small groups of 4-5)

- 7 Principles (viii checkmarks)
 - Humility (iv)
 - Acceptance (ii)
 - Embrace people and ideas (vi)
 - Growth through attraction (vii)
- 7 Principles expressed through:
 - Sustainability (Spiritual, environmental, fiscal) (xi)
 - Music (performance, variety, diversity/richness) (vii)
 - Covenant (“begin again in love...”) (v)
 - Gathering place for open exchange of ideas, actions (xi)
- Change agent (more visible, more recognizable) (vii)
- Youth involvement (x)
- Training, education, advocacy (viii)

“What is your wildest hope for 10 years from now?”

- Growth, with courage to stay humble
- 12 hour/day activity @UUFM, with variety of people & actions
- Dominant church in Mankato—spawned 2 new UU congregations in area
- Known center for information and resources to address preparation and action to be adaptive and resilient to current events.
- Planning new building to accommodate all our initiatives
- Charles Ave. commonly known as “Church on the Hill” where community comes to meditate, talk, and come together to act on issues of justice.
- Most dynamic and *growing* church in the city

- Vibrant caring community of diverse membership and active engaged focus that is intergenerational—strong youth leadership, seeking a third ministry staff person.
- Just returned from El Paso with 20 youth that did mission work with immigrants
- Major involvement with local and global community

“What does the word ‘Spiritual’ mean to us?” And why does it matter that we engage with the concept within a religious community?

- Health
- Accepting
- Mystery
- Help
- See Beauty
- Action
- Diverse
- Difficult (term means many things simultaneously)
- Young
- Answering questions
- Good history here

“What themes are emerging? What is our vision?”

- Awe, wonder, mystery—with humility
- Change agent
- Sustainability
- Welcome
- Expansion, through
 - Welcome
 - Youth
 - Partnerships
 - Space
- 7 Principles
- Serving—Justice in Action
- Building resilience/adaptability

“What are the obstacles and opportunities to achieving our vision?”

- Opportunities
 - Energy conviction
 - Relatively stable social order
 - Attract fellow seekers who share UU values
 - Grounds and building have “good bones” for developing further
 - Involvement in community to make us better known
 - Lots of things need improving
 - Opportunity to grow
 - Questionable premises
 - New contributing members
 - Energy to inspire and attract the next generation of leaders

- Minister
- Sustainability challenge—ever changing meaning with earth’s resources and knowledge changing
- Opportunity to do with humility
- Wealth of resources—MS, Gustavus, activist churches, Diversity Council, YWCA, etc.
- People hungry for spiritual support because of hard times
- Others are doing good work and there is the opportunity to work together
- Grants & special project fundraising
- Food justice
- Social justice
- Environmental justice
- LGBTQ justice
- Congregation as resource
- Space as resource
- 7 Principles as resource
- Minister as resource
- Minister to support us in the mystery while doing the work
- Obstacles
 - Need website person
 - Better online UU website
 - Need funding
 - Lots of things to change/limited amount of people to help
 - Hyper use of resources
 - Lack of involvement by congregation (volunteerism)
 - Failing climate and economy
 - People power (burnout/overextension)
 - Physical/body challenges
 - Fire, flood, foreclosure on mortgage