

**First Congregational UU Service With The Transition Team
Sunday, April 3, 2022**

Results of Question #1

What one element of our typical Sunday service is the most important to you? (Some people wrote down two things and both are included)

Joy and Sorrows 3

Engaging Sermon 8

Fellowship 8 (included answers: talking, community, togetherness)

Professional Minister 4

Music/Meditation 1

Discussion Highlights

- Rather than one thing, I'd like us to keep the "magic" of a well-done service.
- The whole experience of a service makes it important.
- Being around like-minded people with shared values is important.
- We should continue to be a home for liberal thought and faith.

Question #2

What kind of service do you prefer? A service led by a minister? A lay led service? Or a Mix of both?

- Professional Minister 2
- Combination 6
- 50/50 1
- Mostly professional 3
- Lay Led and pastoral 2
- No preference 1
- Combination & rites of passage 1

Discussion Highlights

- Lee said we can't expect all things from all people and need to be specific when choosing what a minister can do for us
- Dennis said we must not just *want* things, we must *do* them.
- Nellie said, shared ministry meals all of us. She liked Rev. David's classes on UU history, etc.
- Joan like classes, too. Book talks, Shared pulpit, discussions on social justice.
- Lee said there are more minister resignations in the UUA than in the past, so we have a smaller pool of ministers to consider.

Question #3

Would a Sunday small group discussion or potluck gathering be as spiritual as a scripted service?

- YES...love different Sunday Experiences 5
- Occasionally, yes – frequently, no 3
- Fellowship hybrid once a month 1
 - Or evening service once a month
- Once a month 6
- Traditional Service only 2
- More potluck after service 1

Discussion Highlights

- Loosey-goosey can be good –
- Cathie said we could call it an alternative service – would like it to be the whole service – such a as a meal, hike or something out in nature the whole time.
- Rosemary mentioned that not everyone can hike, so maybe hybrid better.
- Nellie stated that intentionality is important when we meet, so visitors see that when we do a loosey goosey service, we are not “crazy.” We should be mindful to keep our values in mind and conduct actual services or a hybrid, even if we have a hike. “If we are to increase our membership, our services must be based on a theme in line with our principles.”
- One suggestion: shorter sermon with a specific topic and discussion
- Meditation service would be nice

Final Discussion

Lee reviewed the types of ministers on the handout (see attached) and said some valuable advice she received was not to do what big congregations do to grow because that does not work. The best strategy is to “Do you.” Decide “What makes us US?” and then go forward.

Gwen asked Lee to talk about timeline. Lee informed everyone that the usual timeline is for an interim or contract minister to start Aug. 1st. Most function on a school calendar schedule.

Lee gave a finance snapshot: The associated median compensation that includes salary and housing for a full-time minister for a small congregation = \$60,000/year for a small congregation.

Our current offering budget = \$74,000 - 82,000/yr.

Expenses: we just paid for a new roof and building/grounds budgets are ongoing.

Rev. David’s current compensation package = \$43,000

General recommendation is that congregations who own their own facility **not** devote more than 50% of their income to ministerial expense.

Rosemary brought up that our economy is changing as of late and is unstable. This could be challenging going forward.

Dennis said and Lee confirmed: Making a wish list is great but we can't do everything.

Dennis said we want to keep this place but we must keep it going. Dennis could use more help in buildings and grounds.

Sherrie asked if Rev. David was on 2/3 time or 3/4 time for payment. Lee said she would check. He switched from a 50% minister to three Sundays. Sherrie wanted to know if we were going to hire an interim minister and wasn't sure if that's the direction we were going.

Lee said we may not find an interim minister and we need to keep our ministry going...we need to think out of the box since time is short and there are many considerations.

Cathie Field – the worship planning team plans all services. They will have to plan them without a minister. She heard from UUA that we many have to manage without a minister for several months before we find someone – if we find someone.

Dennis said the first Sunday in July is open. He said he thinks there is an abundance of untapped talent in the congregation and hopes they step forward to give a talk sometime. It's all-hands-on-deck for now. Is anyone willing to sign up for this upcoming Sunday in July?

Nancy Byrne asked if anyone in the congregation would like to join the Program Planning team.

Nellie restated that the role of the Transition team is to decide what we will do in between Rev. David leaving and our settled minister search. There may be a new search committee in our future to decide on a settled minister.

Jennifer said one hard choice might involve only meeting twice a month so we don't experience volunteer burnout. She realized it may not be popular but might be helpful – we need to care for one another.

Lee stated that our next meeting will involve a reality check as we consider the size of our congregation, the money available, and how many ministers are available or fit our desired profile.

Gwen concluded our first meeting with a reading.

QUICK SUMMARY:

Sermons and fellowship are most important to us. What we have been doing with both minister-led and alternative services, along with classes, special interest groups and events is good, with the caveat that maybe the OBX community doesn't yet recognize us as the home of liberal thought and religion. Potlucks/discussions would be good at least once a month. We need to remember to include a focus on our religion/principles in every service.

Our finances are limited and as are the number of available ministers. Our church property- inside and out--- is both a financial responsibility and important to us spiritually. If we are to survive for a time without a minister, and have the kind of services we like, everyone is going to need to take responsibility; all need to be involved in creating services and/or work with the program committee to make them happen. Avoiding volunteer burnout may require decreasing the number of services per month.

Notes by Rosemary Rawlins/Summary by Gwen Taylor

My apologies if I did not get all quotes exactly right or know who said what – some comments came from online. It was a delightful, spirited discussion. Numbers from our surveys did not add up since many people gave multiple answers and we counted them all.