

Membership Trustee (MT) Annual Report Church Year 2010 – 2011

It has been a busy year for this new Membership Trustee (MT). The bulk of work fell in three main areas:

1. Membership Task Force responsibilities;
2. Cleaning up the membership roster such that HVUUC could meet its Fair Share Congregation fiscal responsibilities; and
3. Working with Membership Development in its continuing efforts to improve the path toward committed membership.

Membership Task Force: MT served as co-chair with Virgil Stephens. This Task force developed 3 policies, at Board request, two of which (Church Directory; Membership) will help guide the work of future MTs, and a third (Attendance), assuming it is followed, will be one useful measure when evaluating the effectiveness of Extended Sundays Programming as it comes into being this next church year. In addition to this policy development work, the Task Force sought out feedback from: other churches about their path to membership, current visitors, recent congregants, and recently-inactivated members about their experience at church, with hopes of enhancing HVUUC's collective ministry efforts in the year to come. The most noteworthy finding was the difficulty that the majority of the newer folks who responded were having with getting "connected". For Board attention, there were 3 separate comments about Board members being aloof/superior/unfriendly. I think we need to attend to this more this next year.

Membership Roster: Continuing the work of the previous MT (who recognized the large number of rarely seen members who were not contributing time treasure or talent), much of the work of the summer and autumn for the MT involved checking on missing members. Efforts were made to inform members of new programming, encourage involvement, assess concerns, and finally, to suggest participation as a friend congregant for those who continued inactivity despite efforts to engage. As a result of this work, HVUUC's membership roster was reduced from 153 to 145 members. For the most part, the members we now have in our book as active members are just that – actively participating and/or contributing financially to support the mission and vision of HVUUC. Though this work has had its painful moments, I believe it will contribute to the health of the church.

Membership Development:

After the unpleasant task of asking non-involved members to consider changing their membership status to friend congregant rather than member, the philosophy of the Path to Membership program has changed. We are now encouraging folks to get involved, learn more about the church, pledge, and when they are fairly confident that we are the place they wish to call their church home, to then officially join. The emphasis on a more serious commitment (as opposed to some years prior when the church's financial responsibility to the UUA and district was never discussed, and the importance of

contributions of time, treasure and talent was barely mentioned) has resulted in way fewer new members this year. (Six people took the Path to Membership class and only one joined.)

In addition, the new congregant survey indicated some other concerns that visitors were/are having with getting integrated in to the church community. As a result of this feedback, the Blue Cup program was discontinued and the Welcome Center and new to UU monthly group were started. Kinks are still being worked out in this new system.

Committee/team updates:

Membership Administration: Raj Mehta has agreed to continue as Membership Administrator this next year. He has done an amazing job of keeping up to date with the many ins and outs of those visitors who wish to receive the Yahoo Newsletter.

The **Membership Development team** re-organized in the spring of 2011. There are now 10 specific tasks with a coordinator for each task. Tasks are organized to help move visitors toward engaged congregants; engaged congregants toward membership; and new members toward committed members. The team will continue to meet quarterly and will evaluate the effectiveness of the re-organization next spring. Currently the assigned roles are:

CHAIR: Brad Helmer – with hopes of mentoring Mark Wetherall (?) into taking on this role next

Greeters – Sue Shuler

Path Publicity: Andrea Sawyer

Visitors Table – Greg Love

Path Class: Phyllis Cairnes

Welcome Center – Martha Rubenstein

Ingathering: Ann Overton

New to UU group Coordinator – Gary Melvin

Spring Mentors: Gracia Basham

Fall Mentors: Oreon Millard

Other likely team members incoming: Ramesh Munjal & possibly Angie Elkins

Caring Team: The Caring Team has had an extremely busy year, with several serious illnesses, hospitalizations, and deaths to deal with, requiring lots of cards, visitations and food.

Since the departure of artist member Gabrielle Zeiger, cards are being purchased rather than hand-made. (Our new cards, designed by a friend of Raj Mehta, offers a simple chalice on front and a blank inside.) Cards are routinely sent to our elderly/infirm congregants who are no longer able to attend services.

The new offering of the Caring Team – Candles Cards – for written candles of community, have not been well utilized by the congregation. However, the Candles Guidelines, now being sent out quarterly to remind people about the parameters for a candle, and the Service Coordinator’s introduction seem to have impacted on the length and nature of the messages delivered by regular congregants.

Caring Team has been pleased to have a couple new members this spring (Rebecca Smith, Nan & Lee Sexton) to join the current members (Gracia Basham, Wanda Earp, Louise Mayo, Betty Kramer, Jo Anne Medlin, Deanna Richardson, Deb Helmer). They hope to recruit a few more this summer, as several of the coordinators (Jo Anne Medlin & Betty Kramer) have taken leadership positions on the Board and may wish to reduce their work load. The largest concern for the Team is the absence of new leadership. Gracia Basham has wanted to step down as chair, but has been unable to recruit a replacement. It is hoped that one of the newer members may step up to the plate, as Gracia has many other things that require her time and attention.

Fellowship: Though Freda Love was incredibly frustrated with the lack of volunteerism last spring (she grudgingly agreed to have her arm twisted to take on this year), I am delighted to report that she says this year has been much easier in recruiting volunteers, and as a result, she is willing to stay on as coordinator for another year. Praise the Heavens! (This position is VERY hard to recruit for.) It has helped that several Covenant groups have taken on the Potluck set-up/clean-ups which are always the hardest to recruit for. I will forward this feedback to the Covenant Group Facilitators, so that they can appreciate the value of this service.

Womens Group and Retreat:

Mary Williamson, who has served as coordinator for at least six years, says she is okay with retaining this responsibility at this point. Rosemary Kleske has again agreed to coordinate the November Womens retreat.

MACHO: Ramesh Munjal will serve as coordinator for MACHO for the upcoming year.

Circle Suppers: Sue Shuler and Sharmi Mehta have agreed to continue as Circle Supper coordinators for another year. Given a difficulty with finding hosts, we will be reducing the number of Circle Suppers from 3 to 2 for the upcoming year. We did some brain storming about handling the difficulty of finding hosts for families with children. This need will be highlighted in next year's recruitment efforts.