



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Making Use of our Past

Key Activities

Researched PBG training support resources for the Board and shared with Ken.

Collected other UU congregations' linkage polices and shared with our Linkage Committee.

Forwarded last year's GA communications and E-Soundings articles to Carrie.

Prep for March BoT meeting – agenda etc.

Mostly I raised money, knocked on doors and made 10 -15 daily telephone calls to voters in Bridgeport's 130th District. Life as I knew it was suspended for 5 weeks during my campaign.

UU News

The 2018 UUA General Assembly begins on Wednesday, June 20th and ends on Sunday June 24th Kansas City. Our TUCW Board will be selecting delegates in April. This will be an important GA in a structural sense including delegates voting on the proposed bylaw changes that would -

- ❖ make all language in the UUA bylaws gender neutral;
- ❖ allow staggered terms for those serving on the Ministerial Fellowship Committee;
- ❖ change the board's two youth observer positions to youth trustees with voting rights and two-year terms; and
- ❖ simplify and shorten Commission on Social Witness processes for Statements of Conscience and Actions of Immediate Witness.

The UUA board also agreed to develop a proposed bylaw change that would formally **allow more than one person to serve in the position of UUA Moderator**. The UUA board hopes to have delegates vote on a formal change to the definition of the position before the next election of a moderator to a full term in 2019.

At the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Unitarian and Universalist merger at General Assembly in 2011, Peter Morales, President of the UUA said, "As I look back on our history and look ahead to our future, I see how our past can be either a springboard or a prison. Our history can either trap us or inspire us to set out in new directions. The critical thing is what use we make of our past."

Our congregation organized in 1949 and incorporated as the First Unitarian Church of Fairfield County. Next year will be our 70th Anniversary – not 'the BIG one' – which will be our 75th in 2024. I share the belief that congregations should celebrate anniversaries at least every twenty-five years so that each generation involved has an opportunity to learn about the church's history be part of a commemoration of the shoulders we all have stood on.

So, what are the milestones in TUCW's history that can imprison or inspire its leadership? There are many, and the ones I have selected to highlight below may not be ones you would name but I think they are interesting:

- ❖ The boldness of our founders who grew the tiny fellowship of 12 individuals into a congregation that acquired land, built a building and called and ordained a succession of UU ministers.
- ❖ Our independence from the UUA and pride in going it alone and doing things our own way juxtaposed with the significant number of members from TUCW who became leaders in the Association.
- ❖ The various challenges with our building – the roof, the organ, the meeting house renovations (and our last Capital Campaign) the lift, and now the very structures holding it all together.
- ❖ WUSG – the Westport Unitarian Singles Group – that grew from 13 newly separated members of the congregation in 1975 to 4,227 members coming from as far away as 100 miles seven years later.
- ❖ Our continuing struggles with funding our mission, ministries and vision for this faith, as well as the financial strains of maintaining our buildings and grounds.

Why talk about history right now?

We changed our governance from one of management to one of vision so we would help the congregation look well into the future. We are now face to face with a looming 70th anniversary as a congregation and, more importantly to my mind, twenty (20) years since our last capital campaign. This would be an excellent time to make use of our history to address the many and growing repairs and renovations needed by our 57-year-old building. Congregations can and do effectively use their history celebrations as an integral part of successful fundraising programs, especially capital campaigns. That's how TUCW did it in 1998 combing the 50th Anniversary planning with the launch of the Capital Campaign that gave us the new kitchen, restrooms, and converted the parsonage into our Meeting House.

A 70th Anniversary Committee should come into being ideally about eighteen to twenty-four months before the anniversary. That, my fellow Board members, is like now.

Lynda