

April 13, 2020

## **Report and Recommendation of Staffing Assessment Team**

(Rev. Pam Wat, Cindy Cohen, Dale Stratton, Marina VanRenssen)

The retirement of First Unitarian's Honorary Minister of Music prompted a staffing assessment that covered:

- The role of music in the Church's mission
- Alternatives providing required music leadership
- Other staffing priorities
- Opportunities and Recommendations

### Music Role

Traditionally, music has played a major role in the worship function at First Unitarian, in celebrating Rites of Passage and in other program activities designed to achieve its mission. Special music programs have fostered interaction with other groups and faiths and served to draw potential new members to the congregation. One program highlight is our Rieger tracker organ, built in Austria specifically for our sanctuary, and installed in 1977. It serves both as our church organ and a recital instrument for community enjoyment. The music program has drawn talented staff and volunteers over the years, supplemented by guest performers whose cost has been partially underwritten by contributions to the Counterpoint Society in addition to the church budget. We affirm the importance of continuing this program and the Music Director position.

### Music Leadership

The team researched music staffing in other UU and Christian Churches, including job descriptions and salary levels provided by the UUA. The team concluded that 20 hours per week of music staffing is typical for a church of our size. This generally encompasses a Music Director position with overall program accountability including budget management, and who personally or through others directs the choir, selects music for worship, performs or accompanies on one or more instruments. The Music Director may engage and supervise other musicians to augment some or all of these services.

The team reviewed the Honorary Minister of Music job description which has been a 30 hours per week position. It was found to include functions such as

pastoral care, event planning and execution, sanctuary decorating, AV planning and assistance, and custodial support which are not directly germane to the music program and now fall into other staff areas of responsibility. The team agreed that an ongoing music program must focus on its significant role in worship while including both music diversity and special performers (soloists, guest musicians, etc.). Other elements of a music program (ex. children's choir, concerts, bell choir, etc.) should be evaluated based on congregational interest, available personnel (paid or volunteer) and funding.

A position description for a part-time music director (20 hours/week) has been developed and is attached.

### Other Staffing Priorities

Volunteers are currently serving as unpaid staff in many ongoing and critical functions of First Unitarian church life. Their services are on a prescribed and sometimes intense schedule and for many these assignments are of long duration. In some instances, it precludes their participation in the broader life of the church. Examples include CYRE teachers and leaders, pastoral care associates, A/V team, office operations, the communication team and membership team. Given the demographics of current church membership, growing needs in several areas are falling on a smaller pool of available people and skills.

### Opportunities

With change comes opportunities and difficult choices. The need to fill the Minister of Music position provides an opportunity to restructure the position into a 20 hours per week Music Director focused specifically on the music program. It also releases salary expense in the church's operating budget to create another part-time, 10 hours per week position in another area of staff need.

The Assessment Team reviewed the needs in the various areas outlined under Staffing Priorities. With the church's upgraded facilities and new ministerial leadership, more potential members are participating in church activities. A fundamental need for the ongoing health of this congregation is to integrate a larger number of newcomers into active, contributing, sustaining members of First Unitarian.

Two areas offer the greatest opportunity for attracting and involving new members:

- an engaging and relevant CYRE (Children and Youth Religious Exploration) program for children, youth and their parents to explore Unitarian Universalism principles. Experience indicates engaged children are effective at involving their parents. However, CYRE program should include paid, professional leadership to reduce volunteer assignments and free parents to explore and assume roles in other church activities.
- a structured, professional program of engaging visitors to First Unitarian in a warm, welcoming way and offering multiple paths to connect and engage with church programs and with one another. Such a program, Faith Forward, has been successfully demonstrated in other congregations. Although involving volunteers, it requires trained and professional coordination for successful implementation.

The CYRE team has already requested hiring 2 to 4 paid Religious Exploration Guides to address declining volunteerism and shifting teaching models. One position has been included in the proposed 2020/21 budget with a phased in period of 3 to 4 years for additional positions. A Job Description is attached.

In addition to the Music Director and an initial Religious Exploration Guide, the Assessment team concludes that a part-time, 10 hours per week, Membership Coordinator is another priority position that should be filled. A Job Description is attached.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Hire a Part-Time Music Director (20 hours/week)
2. Hire a Part-Time Membership Coordinator (10 hours/week)
3. Above positions report to Rev. Pam and are budget neutral based on the 2019-20 budget which included a 30 hours/week minister of music
4. Continue with the paid RE Guides model described above (previously approved for inclusion in 2020-21 budget)