



Congregational Meeting Recap

On December 13, 2009, All Souls held its Fall Semi-annual meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to approve the operating budget of the church for 2010. I made some introductory comments related to the budget process and where we are and, in order to insure that we have good communication as a community, the following is a recap of some of those comments.

First of all, two apologies: first, I had intended to get this to you last week; and second, I had planned on speaking for closer to 10 minutes, and it turned into a much longer meeting. I apologize, but also thank you for your attendance and interest during the discussion. Secondly, thank you for your trust in me as your Board of Trustees President. I am truly honored.

Roger Gilles provided an update in the ministerial search process and where we are. The congregational profile has been posted in the UUA website for such purposes, where candidates can review congregational profiles of open pulpits throughout UUA churches. As candidates express an interest in us, we will start sharing additional information, called a congregational packet with them, and they will share information, called a ministerial packet, with our search committee. This exchange and review is done within the search committee, and is not available for the congregation to review. The search committee's goal is to present a single candidate to All Souls sometime in the Spring. The committee is comprised of Roger, Kate O'Hare, Rita Petteys, Mike Harris, Cindy Johnson, and Elgin Vines. Please thank them the next time you see them for their dedicated and courageous work in guiding us through this process that uniquely defines the democratic principles in our faith tradition.

Related to the budget, the budget document as proposed by the Board of Trustees was distributed. The budget document is also available from the website (click the "2010 Budget Posted" link on the left hand side). During the budget process, the Board felt the energy, commitment and passion of the congregation, and in presenting this budget to you, we also present hope to you that this church will indeed thrive in 2010 and beyond. In summary, this budget has:

- Our programs are 100% funded from the program boards budget requests
- Staff salaries begin to be restored with a planned mid-year salary increase
- Beginning repayment of borrowed funds from the building/investment fund

In the cottage meeting I attended, a member requested that the congregation be told if the pledge drive was successful. I want to answer that question. However, the answer also depends on how you measure success.



If the measure of success is: is the church 100% funded through pledges? Then, the answer is no. Our initial goal for the Annual budget Drive was over \$130,000, and we were short of that number.

If the measure of success is: Are pledges higher than last year? Then the answer is YES! The pledge drive resulted in a 6% increase over last year's pledges. And, this is in tough economic times, and, perhaps more importantly, each person who pledged knows that we will have a ministerial change. Your response has been incredible and you should be congratulated!

If the measure of success is: Do our pledges fund a significant portion of our ongoing operating expenses? Then the answer is YES!

Looking in more detail at the budget, it should be noted, and I believe, somewhat "public knowledge" that we don't necessarily have a "budget problem", we have a "cash flow" problem. Our cash requirements are in the \$9000-\$10000 per month range at a "normal pace". There are some non-monthly expenses that can change that pace, and we need to prepare for them. Being just shy of \$120,000, pledges fund that normal pace cash flow. This is good. But we also need to improve our cash flow, so that the pledges come in at a more constant rate. As of October 2009, our incoming pledges represented 70% of the pledge amount for that year, leaving 30% as planned incoming in the last 2 months of the year. If you just even that out over 10 months, that means that we are receiving 7% per month, or 21% per quarter, which is under our "normal pace" expenses. So, from a budget position, we are okay, we need to improve on our cash flow to have normal pace receipts to match our expenses. How to do that? If you are not already, please consider doing the following:

- Use direct deposit. Please see David Soet or Meribeth Nuedelmann for slips.
- Even out your pledge giving through the year. If you have variable income over the year, perhaps consider trying to even out quarterly.
- Please fulfill your personal commitment to your pledge. If your financial situation changes and your priorities need to change that is completely understandable, please let us know so that we are able to plan accordingly.

You will notice that this budget contains additional fundraising for the general fund and for the search process. We have a new fundraising policy that allows more opportunities, and encourages more "outside the church" fund-raising activities.

We will need to be creative as well as generous in funding the search process. Much as been discussed already, and the Board and Search Committee will continue to work together to insure that the search committee is properly funded to fulfill its mission of finding our first called minister. As the search process unfolds there will be cash and non-cash raising opportunities. Please consider being able to provide meals, transportation, office equipment such as a PC or laptop, cell phone, or other gifts.



The Board has approved the action to apply for a Chalice Lighters grant. We will update you as progress is made.

As mentioned previously, on the expenses side, there may be a few questions. The ministerial salary number presents a combination of current and called minister remuneration. We are planning on increasing the staff salaries mid-year. We are planning on beginning to repay the loans from the building/investment fund. And, our programs are 100% funded!

So, in closing, just look at where we are! Just look at some of the possibilities for 2010 and 2011:

- Not considering the ministerial search, we are less than \$3000 from fully funding our church operations – what we “need” to do. We are very close! Do you realize that if we receive 98% of pledge commitments (instead of the 95% planned), we have made it!
- We are \$5000 shy of offering benefits to our called minister for 2010. We want to do this, but at this point, can not guarantee this. Annual benefits at the UUA recommended amounts are closer to \$9000. We need creative ways to fund either the entire amount or partially with an allowance.
- We are \$5000 shy of completely restoring staff salaries.

Beyond that, what are the possibilities? Build up our building fund? Expand programs? Give more to the community? The opportunities are endless!

With a great 2010, we will position ourselves for the many possibilities for 2011, and renew our strategic planning process to provide vision and guidance as we look forward to celebrating our 10th anniversary in 2011!

In Peace,

Dan Stegink