



# Unitarian Universalist Church of South County

A member of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

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June 1, 2005

## President's report – Annual Meeting June 5, 2005

This year has been an eventful year for UUCSC. Our continued growth has propelled us into the world of the “Mid-size Congregation” which has wide ranging implications for our financial plans as well as for our status in the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA) and the Pacific Southwest District (PSWD). The financial implications are such that we will need to plan for additional costs to keep our promise to be a fair compensation employer. In addition, we will have increased contributions to the UUA and PSWD to maintain our status as a fair share congregation. All of these goals are important to the future of UUCSC since we will be embarking upon a campaign to secure a new physical space and will need to take advantage of programs at all levels of our larger denomination.

Your board of directors undertook to implement the recommendations from Jeri Moulder and updated the Bylaws to include new standing committees. Those new committees have begun their work and we have been delighted to see progress in three significant areas – (a.) Comprehensive Planning has a preliminary draft in place for our review, (b.) Capital Campaign has held several meetings with another UUA consultant and is well underway to putting a process in place for a campaign, and (c.) the New Facilities Committee is on the lookout for any and all opportunities for us to improve our physical space whether that is to lease or purchase an existing religious edifice, commercial space, or property on which to build. So while it may appear to you that we are in a “quiet period” here at UUCSC, I can assure you that much is being done to lay the foundation for a great flurry of activity in the near future.

The board has also undertaken to establish policies whenever possible. We are now running a budget that has reached \$250,000 and we have more than 150 members in our congregation. Our Children's Religious Exploration class has about 90 young people enrolled with an average of 35 or so attending on any given Sunday morning. With these kinds of numbers and activities, clear policies and guidelines for those in leadership roles is an imperative. Thanks to the hard work of several board members, a new template has been created for policies and several new policies have been put in place. There will be many more to come as we move forward.

A more difficult struggle is our governance model. The UUCSC board has stated that it wishes to move toward a Carver Policy Governance model. Many of our UUA congregations are moving toward such a “Policy Governance” model with most (if not all) never reaching a pure policy model but rather a hybrid of Policy and Managing Boards. A simplified view of a “Policy Board” is one that only sets limits – in other words, the board governs not by giving directions for day-to-day operations, but rather sets limits for committees and individuals through policy. A quick example is we might set a policy that states that “designated funds cannot be used for

**Minister:** Rev. John Millspaugh; **Minister Emeritus:** Rev. Robert Jordan Ross; **President:** Dave Kinnear  
**VP-Ops:** Lynn Cowan; **VP-Fin:** Alan Hull; **Treasurer:** David Keen; **Secretary:** Margaret Pierce  
**Directors:** Liz Biewen, Connie Pursell, Scott Craig

purposes other than those for which they were designated.” This sets clear limits but does not “tell” the finance committee in detail what to do with the funds within those limits. This gives the committees maximum flexibility to appropriately manage the funds; it is the most empowering form of governance. Should the committee do something that the board or congregation feels is inappropriate, but doesn’t violate the limits set, then the policy is revised or new policy made to tighten the limits. The practical result of such a governance model is to free the board from running the operation in a hands-on manner while at the same time giving maximum latitude to the committees to accomplish the good works of the organization. As we grow further, it will be even more important for our board to move toward a policy governance model. This will be an evolutionary process and will require the board to get in the habit of questioning the appropriateness of everything that comes before it – should the board be considering this or is it a committee issue? Is there a policy in place and does it set the proper limit for the committee to do its job in the most creative manner? This very interesting and practical form of governance will need congregational support and encouragement to be implemented.

While there is far more to celebrate than to worry about, there have been some rough spots on our journey this year. The rental to the Seventh Day Adventists (SDA) group has not gone well. For the first time in our history at the Obrero location, our landlord has felt the need to complain about the facility usage. Indeed, many of you have voiced concern over the misuse of our facilities. Your board has been made aware of the issues and the SDA folks have been notified in writing that they must not continue in this vein or their contract will be terminated. Termination would be unfortunate for us financially since there is a significant income involved. However, we cannot and will not jeopardize our own position with the landlord by failing to address and enforce the rental requirements.

We are also struggling to fill our committees, especially committee chair positions. Our V.P. of Operations is responsible for the “staffing” of the volunteer positions and in that capacity Lynn Cowan has expended a tremendous amount of energy. While some of us have stepped up to the plate, many positions are going unfilled. It is a fact for our organization that we have to do the tactical work of the congregation; without volunteer power, we will not accomplish our goals. I would urge everyone to realize that more than financial support is required to make UUCSC our spiritual home; we need your loving participation at every level from the Board to the Committees. No one committee is more important than another; they are all needed to complete our stated mission. Please pick a couple of areas where you feel you would like to contribute either because of your own skills or because you would like to learn new skills and then find out which committees meet your needs and volunteer. And please don’t be afraid to be the chair of one or more of those committees because I can assure you from personal experience that you will have all the help you need to be successful.

Of course one of the big bumps in the road is having our own Jo Franco leave us. What a fantastic job she has done with Children’s Religious Exploration. Some lucky congregation somewhere will be receiving the benefit of this very professional Director of Religious Exploration. I know of no other person who I’ve seen in that position who has earned the title more than Jo. I think she has found her calling in life

and encourage her to pursue it with vigor, determination, and love. She is positively affecting lives and furthering the cause of liberal religious thought. We and many others owe her a debt of gratitude for the work she has done here both as a paid staff member and as a stellar UUCSC volunteer.

And finally, speaking of volunteers, we come to the annual "President's Award." This is never easy for an organization like ours. As I mentioned all committees are important to the life of our congregation, even if one committee may be in the limelight at any particular time. And so it is very dangerous to pick out any one volunteer or committee for an "award" because they are all important. In years past I've tried to mitigate my discomfort by picking MANY committees and individuals. This took a long time at our meeting and still people who should have been honored were left out. At one point, I decided to do away with this award. Yet, I think we do need to honor at least one or more of our people. Recognition is a good thing for all of us. But the decision is always painful, because everyone deserves recognition. So this year, I asked for help from the board and from the committees. And, as I said, you can count on others here at UUCSC to help you when you are brave enough to ask. Also, I have limited the award to two individuals.

There were many excellent suggestions from the committees. After reviewing and thinking about them all, I have decided to give this year's award to two very deserving UUCSC people, and by extension, the committees they represent. First is Darcy Medina. Darcy has committed her time and love to our youngest UU family members almost every Sunday this year. Darcy also spent many hours cleaning and rearranging the nursery space so that it is safer and more enjoyable for the toddlers. One thing that has most impressed me is that on her own initiative, Darcy began bringing the older toddlers up to the preschool RE sessions so that they could see first hand what it would be like to join "the big guys upstairs." Of course this has gotten some of the toddlers really excited about graduating next year. Darcy's love and respect for our young UUs is authentic and inspiring. She embodies hope for our denomination and validates our own investment in the Children's Religious Exploration program. Thank you Darcy.

The second person we honor today is Randi Winters. Randi deserves special recognition for all the hard work she and the Worship Committee has done this past year as well as previous years. As you know, we have many lay led services during the year. These services do not happen by accident. A hard working group of people meet regularly to make sure our worship experience is top shelf even when Rev. John is not in the pulpit. Theirs is no easy task because we are a hard crowd to please. And not only are we difficult to please, the speakers are often difficult to recruit and then difficult to schedule and sometimes difficult people with which to deal.

Randi has raised the bar on the quality, diversity, and variety of our lay led services. But most endearing is how she personally owns these services. On the rare occasion when a service goes poorly, Randi is practically if not literally in tears over the loss of opportunity for an excellent experience. And then we added the burden of two services and almost two full months in the summer for her to fill with outstanding speakers. Randi and her committee has met and exceeded any reasonable expectations for filling our pulpit with quality speakers and providing a wonderful

worship experience. She deserves more than just this award, but our unfailing admiration and gratitude for the work she has done. Thank you Randi.

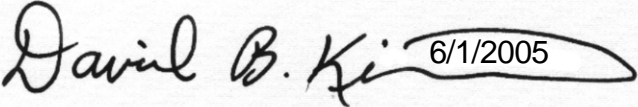
Many others were lifted up for consideration of the President's Award: Free Clarke for facilities maintenance; Joni Zander and Louana Hall for office staff; David Salahi for the award winning web site and quick service to those of us who use it; Jim Semelroth for his years doing the newsletter; the hard work of those on the Ways and Means committee; Penny Kinnear for directing our choir for so many years, and of course Chris Smith for his outstanding effort with the Children's Religious Exploration program. The list can go on to include just about everyone who volunteers their time here at UUCSC.

But there is one other person who I would like to mention today. We as a congregation have made many very good decisions since our formation in 1995. I'm not going to list them all; you know them or have heard about them before. If you're really new here, then I hope you will ask one of the "old timers" about our history. But one of our collective decisions stands out most in my mind, and I would like to take this opportunity as I leave the presidency to say that the past three years has been especially delightful because of our decision to call the Reverend John S. Millspaugh to our free pulpit. What a fantastic decision that was and how grateful I am, and we all should be, to the search committee that found him! I can assure you that he has taught me much about what it means to grow a congregation and has made me stop and rethink some of the concepts that I've gathered over my years in UU congregations. It has been an honor to work with him and to call him my minister. Thank you Rev. John.

There are many more notable events that have occurred this year and the previous four that I would like to mention, but time and space preclude that (thank goodness, eh? This is long enough already!) I wish to thank all of you at UUCSC for the honor of serving as your president and for the support that you have given me and the other leaders of your congregation. I especially want to thank the board for putting up with me and keeping me on target when I wandered those many times.

I have belonged to five different UU congregations across the country from Massachusetts to New York to California. And I've been involved with several others as an outside participant. This congregation has been the most challenging and the most fun. It has been a challenge because we had to accomplish many new things together; things that we had not done before (like merging two congregations). It has been fun because of the excitement and commitment to growth that you have all provided. I hope that we continue that excitement and commitment to liberal religion by moving forward with confidence and optimism in finding a new facility for our spiritual home. We deserve to have a beautiful and spacious environment; we have earned that privilege, and we should be proud to pursue it with enthusiasm.

Yours on the ever changing way,



Dave