

Leadership Succession Planning Team Report for October 2020

The LSPT met by Zoom on Friday, October 23rd attended by Paul Beier, Lisa Skow, Jeremy Young, Theresa deBoer, and Dennis Spurlin. Felicia Bicknell attended as an invited guest. Dora Harrison and Char Tarashanti did not attend.

Congregational Vitality

After everyone checked in at the meeting, Felicia Bicknell started the conversation on the Congregational Vitality Team Charter and Leadership agenda item. She shared that her position as Recruitment and Training Coordinator for the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Program out of Juvenile Court has been funded for three more years. However, job duties in this Covid environment make it difficult at this time to commit to lead a committee to address Beacon's congregational vitality. She also expressed her need to ensure that her activities with Beacon not interfere with her role as an Officer of the Court.

Paul responded with his feeling that we could work with her need to gradually transition into a role that would be beneficial and asked for clarification of concerns she has regarding potential conflicts with her professional role. Paul agreed that she would not have to be the public face for the committee. Other members of the committee will handle newsletters and social media to represent their specific roles for congregational vitality.

Dennis also reiterated that whoever leads the committee should not assume direct responsibility for executing the functions of the committee. Committee members should perform their own recruiting and promotion efforts to accomplish the functions. He offered a few names of Beacon folks that might help with congregational vitality programs and functions.

Lisa expressed an interest in involving more young folks. Paul also gave the name of someone who might help. Jeremy pointed out the committees can have an internal or an external focus. For example, the LSPT focuses more on the members and friends of Beacon while the SJA is more community focused. A committee for congregational vitality would have an internal and an external

scope. He reiterated that there is a lot to do and we can be over tasked and consumed unless we organize and prioritize.

Theresa cautioned against pushing new people into positions that they can't commit to. She provided some history about congregational vitality leadership and offered another name of a possible member.

Felicia asked Dennis about the status of a committee for congregational vitality. He explained that it hasn't thrived since Dora gave up her position as chair to be on the Board. It is currently dysfunctional, except for Paul's work on Circle Suppers and Rev Robin's efforts. *(It is not a situation for blame. Beacon necessarily had to focus on the capital project which was overwhelmingly approved by the congregation. We had to search for an Interim Minister after our settled minister resigned. Now we are in the middle of a pandemic.)*

Felicia summarized by asking what we could do to just get things started. She envisions a series of Zoom meetings with the right people to organize the structure and recruit leaders for the various functions. She is willing to help get things started while we continue to look for someone to chair the committee. She is willing to check in with Rev Robin and then Dora to gain more understanding. She will look into determining who were assigned the functional roles for programs and continue to have conversations with Dennis and members of the LSPT. Felicia doesn't want to commit to taking lead as chair but would like to get started laying the groundwork for whoever can. She asked for a summary from Dennis, as follows:

1. Collaborate with Rev Robin
2. Invite potential resources to a Zoom meeting
3. Based on the response, propose next steps.

Leadership Succession Planning Team Action

Dennis asked that we begin a plan of actions to nominate willing members to fill vacancies for the Board and LSPT expected next year, and to determine if the Board plans to begin a search for a settled minister. What suggestions and guidance can the more experienced members of the team offer?

Theresa offered to provide a list of Board positions that may need to be filled. She also provided guidance by way of describing what was done in previous years. Jeremy offered that outside leadership experience can help offset a lack of Beacon leadership experience.

Felicia suggested that since we cannot meet normally, and conduct our programs normally, we consider asking that the members of the Board and the LSPT continue in place for another year. Asking members to assume a new role in leadership in the middle of this pandemic and all the obstacles it presents, is a big ask. She suggested that perhaps current members of the Board and LSPT could offer to mentor a potential candidate until we restore a level of normalcy that would be less daunting. Theresa asked what it would take to be able to do that, and Dennis offered to check with the Board and bylaws. Felicia suggested that we consider elevating the question to the UUA for guidance. It might be that there may be “good cause” for exceptions to our processes. We are not likely the only UU church facing this issue.

Paul suggested that we explore Felicia’s proposal, and thanked her for staying with the meeting after discussing the reason she was invited. Dennis offered to review the recording of the meeting and draft a way forward. Felicia also recommended that we embrace this new normal for meetings and communication. The technology is being used by more people to do things more easily and effectively. It provides a means to reach out to new audiences.

LSPT Charter

Dennis requested a motion to submit an updated LSPT charter to the Beacon Board for approval and posting to the online Beacon Handbook. The motion was made by Paul and seconded by Jeremy. Lisa pointed out that the acronym for the Congregational Vitality Team needed to be spelled out before it is used. Jeremy asked for the reasoning behind requiring attendance at the CLC meetings. Dennis reported what he recalled from discussions on the Board and at CLC meetings. Committee representation at the CLC meeting facilitates coordination of plans for events and programs between committees. It provides a way to vet proposals from committees that need Board approval before being sent to the Board the following week. It allows for committee review of Board meeting minutes and provides a two-way system of communication between the Board and

congregational activities and programs. *(The Core Leadership Council is the heart of Beacon that keeps the head on track and manages the many limbs.)*

With no other discussion, the members present voted unanimously in favor of the proposed updated charter.

Action Items

Draft meeting notes - Dennis

Research keeping people in position beyond their term limits - Dennis

Make a list of potential vacancies of elected positions – Theresa

Make a list of potential candidates –each LSPT member bring two names to next meeting.