

TVUUC Board Meeting

July 22, 2018

Board Members Present: Matthew Blondell; Denise Coleman; Debbie Ellis; Jeff Kovac; Ginna

Mashburn; John McNair; Wendy Syer; Terry Uselton; Elnora Williams

Ex Officio: Claudia Pressley (briefly)

Minister Evaluation

The 2017-18 TVUUC Board held its final meeting on July 22. The main item on the agenda was to complete a performance evaluation of the Senior Minister. Chris Buice had completed a self-evaluation; the Board then responded to it, and gave a short evaluation for each of the seven areas of responsibility listed in the Senior Minister's Job Description. Chris will then have the opportunity to respond to the Board evaluation. The seven areas of responsibility are:

- Ministry (Sunday services and other ministerial duties)
- Head of Church Staff
- Administration
- UUA Denominational Responsibilities
- Public Ministry
- Supervision of Interns
- Adult Religious Education

Miscellaneous

Claudia announced the list of organizations chosen for the 2018-19 Share-the-Plate program, as follows:

- Planned Parenthood of Middle & East Tennessee
- Remote Area Medical (RAM)
- Tennessee Health Care Campaign
- Lonsdale Environmental Camp at Tremont
- Bridge Refugee Services
- Beck Cultural Center
- Beardsley Farm
- Highlander Research & Education Center
- SEED – Socially Equal Energy Efficient Development
- Interfaith Health Clinic
- Tennessee Immigrant & Refugee Rights Coalition
- Second Harvest Food Bank

The 2018-19 Board will begin its service with an all-day Board Retreat on August 18.

The Board also discussed possible days for the regular Board meetings, as Sundays present time conflicts for some members. A tentative plan is to meet in the evening of the third Tuesday of each month. A final decision will be made after all members of the new board have had a chance to respond. (The September 2018 meeting will be an exception, currently set for September 25.)

Submitted by Wendy Syer, Secretary to the Board.

Senior Minister's Evaluation
July 22, 2018

1. Ministry – Rating: 4

Positive

Chris states that his highest priority is the design and management of Sunday services, and this is apparent. The services are ordinarily well planned. His sermons are articulate and inspiring, and the services he designs are creative and diverse. Services are relevant to current events in appropriate circumstances. Overall, they are well received by the congregation

Areas for Improvement

One of the provisions of the senior minister's job description is that the services be planned in coordination with the Worship Committee. We look forward to the work of a fully functioning Worship Committee, and hope Chris sees this as a way to strengthen lay and visitor services. He needs to act on this soon.

Chris is encouraged to strive for balance in types of worship services to reach the diversity of the congregation. The board is concerned that church attendance has been decreasing. People are choosing, for what ever reason, not to attend on Sundays. We encourage him to work with the worship committee to develop a plan for the year which will be both inspiring and intellectually strong.

2. Head of Church Staff – Rating: 4

Positive

Based on the self evaluation and information from the church staff, the staff seems to be working quite well together. Weekly staff meetings seem to be effective. We applaud his emphasis on team work.

3. Administration – Rating: 3

Positive

Because of solid work by the staff, the scheduling of events and rooms seems to be working well.

Areas for Improvement

As the senior minister acknowledges, fund raising is an important area of improvement. Some of this is his public involvement – statements from the pulpit etc. We also think he needs to be more involved “behind the scenes.” For example, he needs to personally contact the major

donors and those who contribute to the church in other ways to both thank them for their generosity and to hear their concerns. This needs to be done on a face to face basis annually. He should also work with the stewardship committee to identify donors who might be persuaded to increase their pledges to the major donor category.

4. Denominational Affairs – Rating: 4

Positive

This seems to be a strength for Chris. The focus on the Cluster is a new concept, and he seems to be defining exactly what that will be for him and our church.

Areas for improvement

The only comment here is that he may be overly involved in denominational affairs and that he may need to scale back his activity.

5. Public Ministry – Rating: 4.5

Positive

We can be very proud of our Minister and his active, public role in the community. It is especially important for there to be a rational and articulate spokesperson for liberal causes in a relatively conservative community. Our only question is whether time spent on these activities is detracting from time devoted to the TVUUC community itself.

Areas for Improvement

Chris should work to include more members of the congregation in public ministry activities. This goes beyond big events such as the MLK parade or the Pride celebration but inviting individuals to become personally involved in various activities and helping them take ownership in them.

The board encourages Chris to try to use social media more effectively. One possibility is to start a “Reverend Chris Buice” page as a form of public ministry. We take as a model a UCC minister in Portland, OR, Rev. Chuck Currie. He has a Chuck Currie Facebook page where he posts personal and family items and a Rev. Dr. Chuck Currie page which is a running commentary on social justice issues. Chris could post links to important issues and to direct people to his blog.

6. Intern Supervision – Ratings: 5

Positive

Pam Johnson and the previous two interns have all been especially outstanding. It has been a joy to work with them and watch them develop their ministerial skills. We have to believe that

Chris deserves a lot of the credit for choosing such stellar interns, mentoring them, and then giving them space to learn and shine.

7. Adult Religious Education – Rating: 4

Positive

We understand that Chris is an excellent teacher and facilitator. We also applaud his attempts to emphasize cultural diversity in educational activities. Is it unrealistic to suggest that we should have even more classes taught, and educational activities led by him? We hope, as well, that attendance at some of the programs could be increased. Lauren has improved the publicity for these activities; I hope Chris can work with her to increase awareness even more.

Final Thoughts – Overall Rating: 4

We think Chris needs to talk with the board about his long-term personal plans. He has been at TVUUC for 17 years, much longer than any previous minister. How does he envision his future in the ministry? Does he plan to retire from TVUUC or, now that his children have graduated from college, move to another congregation?

Chris voiced concern this past year about all the demands placed on his time. We hope the leadership helped to clarify the vast number of discretionary hours he enjoys. The Board may need to address its priorities for his time.

Chris's closing personal remarks indicate his recognition that we need a new direction, more energy in several areas. We hope he will put energy into the Mediation Program, or some other Right Relations approach. Finally, we are pleased he raised church growth as a concern.