

STUDENT NEWS

by Katie Romano Griffin, Student Minister



I started writing this article bright and early on Tuesday morning, August 25, 2015 while inside the Sankofa Archives at Meadville Lombard Theological School. This particular collection contains works celebrating people of color. The purpose of this collection is to help us look back so that we can look forward into a multicultural future.

My courses do not start until tomorrow, but as a member of the Student Advisory Council, I am here early to help our new students acclimate as I tend to student government issues. I like starting my day with these beautifully maintained tomes. It centers me. I also thought this might be an appropriate place to reflect not only on where we have been as Unitarian Universalists, but as the hymn says, “Where we have come from, who are we, and where we are going.” Understanding these three dynamics is key for me as I continue on this journey through ministry as your intern.

Where have we come from... Last year, my internship’s focus was on working in the community and understanding the intersection of community work and my ministry. In tandem with my internship, I studied Liberal Theology, Constructive Theology, Hebrew Bible, Multi-Faith and Multi-Cultural Ministry, and more. I was able to preach a couple of times at All Faiths last year and attended a few services, sometimes with my husband and two children. I am so grateful for my first year! It was an academically intense, but wonderful year, which has helped cultivate a disposition suitable for my ministerial internship at All Faiths this year.

Where are we... This school year began with a long summer chaplaincy internship at Naples Community Hospital, where I learned how to provide pastoral care in a clinical setting. I worked very closely with Rev. Beard through last year and this summer on forming my ministerial identity while sharpening my skills so that I can be fully prepared to enter into our time together.

Where are we going... My time on-site with you will “officially” commence in early September. What does an Intern Minister do? What does it mean to be a “Teaching Congregation?” When I am not at school, I will be at All Faiths for 20-hours a week on average. You can expect to see more of me at All Faiths services, and events. I may be performing rites of passage such as baby blessings, weddings and/or memorials under the direction of Rev. Beard. I may make hospital visits, or lead worship. I will have regular office hours. Some of my assignments will be related to studying the congregation

and understanding its needs; other assignments might be to implement a program or teach a class. These special assignments and projects will be carefully guided and coordinated with Rev. Beard and the appropriate lay leader.

Under the direction of Rev. Beard, my professors, and with the help of the Internship Committee, I will gain all of the experiences, tools, and wisdom needed to apply to become ordained at the end of our two years together. The members who comprise my committee are: *Steve Fisher, Midge Magstadt, Colleen North, Bond Perry and Fran Way.*

On September 20th, we will recognize the work of the committee at service and I will explain more about this process. I am so grateful for this opportunity and truly looking forward to serving the congregation. For now, I must return to my studies here in Chicago. ■

ALL FAITHS LEADERS ATTEND STEWARDSHIP SYMPOSIUM IN VENICE

by Doug Cartwright

Six All Faiths' representatives took part in a full-day Stewardship Symposium led by Bill Clontz of the UUA Saturday, August 15. The delegation consisted of the *Reverend Margaret Beard, Katie Romano-Griffin, Diane and Doug Cartwright, and Chris and Steve Fisher.* The conference dealt with sharing the problems that congregations face with pledge drives and budgets. Naples, Fort Myers, All Faiths, Port Charlotte, and host, Venice, were among the congregations taking part.

The participants shared success stories and failures with pledge drives and fundraising with Bill Clontz steering the discussion. Clontz stressed open communication with the congregation and emphasized how important it was to use the UUA’s matrix on Fair Share Giving. He said when members of the congregation realize that they alone have the responsibility to fund programs and functions of their individual churches, they respond generously.

A repeated theme of the conference was understanding that your church family is not just a spiritual home where you go to be with like-minded people. It's social justice outreach, support of local charities, and reinforcement of issues vital to its mission statement to make it a vital force worthy of financial support. Clontz asked the question: “Who benefits from a healthy UU Congregation?” The answer: People who founded the church, people who currently participate in its growth and health, and the generations to come who will inherit and continue the work into the future.

All agreed it was a worthwhile way to spend a day and are eager to start building a healthier All Faiths. ■