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Transitional Thoughts

by Rev. Samuel Schaal

Transition Minister

What Does a Post-Pandemic Church Look Like?

The pandemic was / is a cataclysmic global disaster causing much sorrow, pain and challenge. But we also learned new things about being and doing church. There is much conversation among church consultants on the new normal of congregational religious life following the pandemic. Two such consultants are Tony Morgan, founder of the Unstuck Group (great name, from his bestselling book *The Unstuck Church*) who serves the Christian evangelical movement and Susan Beaumont who serves the mainline and liberal churches, including Unitarian Universalism. Both have insights worth considering.

In a pre-pandemic book Morgan advised that one way churches get unstuck is an interruption of some sort that invites a new vision. He said: Interruptions jolt us. They upset the equilibrium. They force a reaction. Interruptions challenge us to pause and assess what's happening. Then build a plan to respond. And ultimately interruptions provoke us to act.

He says the pandemic produced such an interruption, though at a great cost, but that the church can thrive in new ways in this environment.

While it's hard to say at this juncture how the virus will ultimately affect the church or society, what I've seen amid various consultants coupled with what

- **Shifting to multi-platform in-person plus digital ministries.** This has widened our mission field. No longer can we draw a circle on a map around the church and expect that folks more than a 30-minute drive from campus aren't interested.
- **Focused on connections more than membership.** Membership is still important, but belonging and engagement take center stage as we count our success in touching lives, not (merely) enrolling individuals. This is a long needed shift, in my opinion, in our national association of congregations. A congregation's gift to our Unitarian Universalist Association—aka "the dues"—used to be based on number of adult members so it made sense to "clean the rolls" each year of folks who had grown inactive. Now it's based on a percentage of budget, a more accurate measure of activity. We are still cleaning the roles instead of being concerned about touching lives.
- **Focused on connecting to distinct ministries, not necessarily the whole church.** Belonging may not be to the whole church, but to parts of the ministry. Certain ministries will reach certain people. This encourages the church to grow into a program-size systems consciousness.
- **Simple, not complex.** A growing church is a simple church. A complex church is mired in details, processes and busyness, not so much in ministry that makes disciples. This shift from complexity to simplicity is not being discussed in the UUA. It comes out of the evangelical churches. Progressives love process—so much so that if we follow the process we think we've done our job. Says Morgan: "Complexity is one of the most obvious signs that a church has begun to experience decline on the church life cycle." He says just keeping busy distracts from the soul work of religious communities.
- **Invigorating worship.** Given the shift to multi-platform ministry, growing churches need to invigorate worship to be higher quality since it reaches more people. This suggests a mission-centered approach to worship. It has to reach hearts, souls and minds.

There's one more thing I'd add that is the most important. Michele Grove, our religious education consultant who has helped to guide our revisioning of our religious enrichment program has said that when religious education is back to meeting in-person, kids don't need a lot of curriculum or programming. *They need to play.*

So do adults. Let's not forget in the shift to the new normal, we are human beings made to be in relationship with other human beings. The first priority in

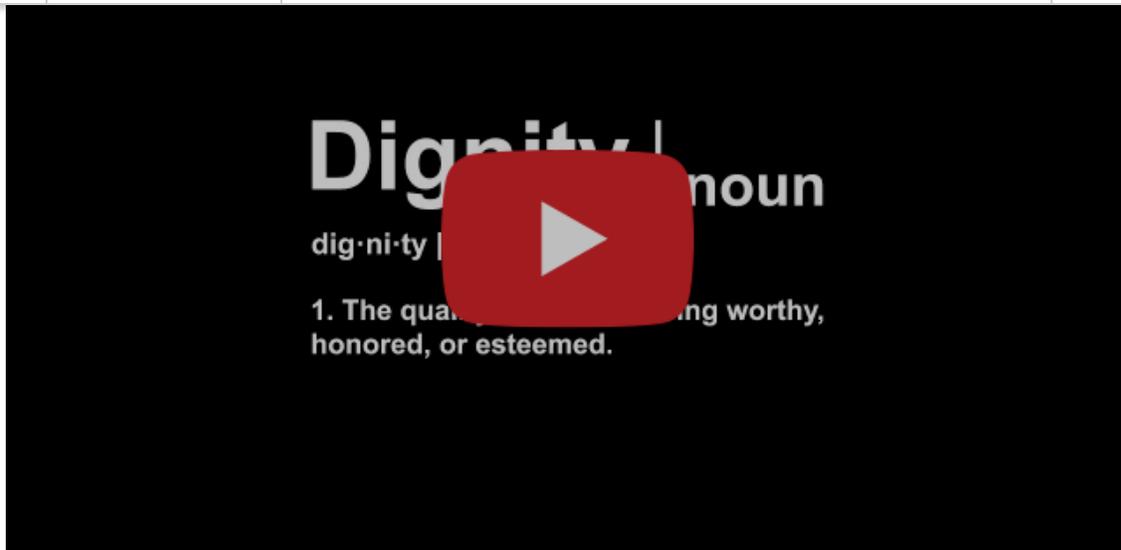


Join UU Wellspring This Fall

UU Wellspring is a year-long spiritual deepening program and already ten percent of First Unitarian Orlando members and friends have participated! UU Wellspring provides opportunities to deepen your identity as a Unitarian Universalist, find hope in these trying times, and deeply connect with your UU faith and with one another. We hope you will join a group next year!. UU Wellspring is suggested for those who have been participating in Unitarian Universalism for at least six months. All of the [information, calendars, and registration are found here.](#)

- Returning UU Wellspring participants, facilitators, and new participants all [register with the same form.](#) Returning participants, please register by May 15 so we can confirm programs.
- New participants, please register by June 1. We will close registration when the program fills.

Contact Linnea for more information at linnea19@gmail.com.



May Share the Plate Partner: IDignity

“While it is better to teach one to fish than to give one a fish, that person will still need a fishing license.”

IDignity was founded in May 2008 by members of five downtown Orlando churches with a mission to restore dignity and hope by providing identification. Through collaboration with government agencies, churches, businesses and community, IDignity assists the poor and disadvantaged in navigating the complex process of obtaining legal identification documents such as birth certificates, Social Security cards and Florida ID cards or driver’s licenses. Identification is often required to access education, employment, benefits, healthcare, housing, voting, banking and numerous other basic human needs. IDignity compassionately, diligently and efficiently helps our neighbors in need obtain proof of their identity, at no cost to its clients.

Although each client’s situation is unique, it takes on average six hours of volunteer time and \$300 to assist a client in obtaining all their various forms of crucial legal identification. Your donations will help sustain our mission and assist more individuals in obtaining their legal identification.

Here are ways to give:

1U Website: Use the Donate button on the upper right-hand section of the home page <https://www.orlandouu.org>

Text: Send a text to 407-456-7082 with the amount you'd like to contribute. Include the \$ sign before the amount. (Do not place a space between the dollar sign and amount). Use the texting code: sharedplate

IDignity: Give directly online at www.idignity.org/sharetheplate.

Please email programassistant1U@gmail.com to help us keep track of donations.



RE Reflections

by Sarah Gray

Interim Religious Enrichment Coordinator

Building a Sustainable RE Program

What does it take to build a sustainable religious enrichment program – one that will sustain us through the rest of this pandemic and our slow build to a multi-platform future? I wish it was an easy, prescriptive answer. But, like most things worth doing, getting there will take deep, intentional work across the entire congregation. Here are three areas to think about as we continue this work together.

- **Build relationships.** Building relationships goes a step beyond interpersonal connections – it's also a covenant between the entire congregation that promises that our church is a safe, secure home for all individuals and families. We need to build our relationships to reiterate that sense of safety, sense of trust, and sense of inclusivity. This includes considering the collective whole when making big decisions, such as the right time to return to in-person worship. While in-person is safe for many, we are still a long way out from being safe for all. Failing to listen to the fears of the more vulnerable - in this case, the immunocompromised and children who are unable to be vaccinated - could damage these relationships we have worked so hard to build over the last year.
- **Team of partners.** The old adage "it takes a village" doesn't just apply to raising children in the home, but also in the church as well. But what is "it"? Is it generating ideas for how to build our future together? Yes, but that's only part. The bigger, more critical part of "it" is rolling up sleeves

- **One answer at a time.** Creating sustainable children and youth ministry or religious enrichment isn't a single problem, and it does not involve a single solution. There is not, and will never be, a magic bullet – the right program lead, the right curriculum, the right renovated classroom space. These are all helpful, and in many cases essential, but not the entire solution. They are but one single answer, addressed one at a time. Our work will never be fully done. There will never be a single checkbox marked “sustainable RE.” We'll continue to face problems, some bigger than others (hello, pandemic!). But, with the right mindset (and healthy relationships and a team of partners), problems will be solved, one at a time. RE will be maintained, and even grow, in healthy ways. And is that not the very definition of sustainability?



Music Musings

by Aubrey Connelly-Candelario

Director of Music

The ‘Wonderful’ World of Copyrighted Music

Is there anything more boring than copyright law? (No offense to any copyright lawyers.) Copyright is a dense, complicated, convoluted matter that affects each one of us on a regular basis, though we do not give it much thought. Rules governing copyright have existed in America since 1790, but the Covid pandemic has brought the matter to our doorsteps. Small schools, community organizations, businesses, and churches often skirt the boundaries of copyright law. Most people do not know the extent of copyright laws and do not realize they are not in compliance. So, what are the rules for music and how do they affect 1U?

The first of the two most important rules is that all musical compositions are covered by copyright except those where the copyright has expired. Any song written in the USA before 1924 is public domain. Each year the public domain date moves forward one year except for any original work of music created after 1977. For those songs, the copyright will extend for 70 years after the composer's death. For instance, if a composer dies in 2000, any song they wrote between 1977 and 2000 will be free to use in 2070. However, any song

know is protected under copyright, as are many of our favorite UU hymns.

The second important rule is that the individual or company that makes a recording or a video, owns all rights to that recording or video.

Together, these rules govern almost every aspect of music and musical performance. The composer owns the rights to the song. If you use it for any public performance, including for educational or religious services, you must get the composer's permission first and they have the right to charge you. The same goes for using a recording of any song.

Both of our current UU hymnals are protected under copyright. We only project hymn lyrics and never the written notes or scores in services because copyright law gives us permission to project the lyrics but not the music in our sanctuary. The rules are even more restrictive for broadcasting music on the internet as we do now. Owning hymnals does not grant us the right to broadcast performances of the hymns or the lyrics. Some of our hymns are public domain, but many are not. For each hymn not in public domain, we must contact the copyright holder and obtain permission to use their work. It is also the composers right to withhold permission to use the hymn unless we pay for the privilege.

Fortunately, many composers have granted all UU churches permission to broadcast their hymns during this time of the pandemic. The UUA publishes a list of hymns available for use in virtual services. Some hymns are not available. It is also likely that after churches resume in-person services, composers will again begin to charge for the use of their hymns in broadcast services.

What does this mean for 1U? Currently, we do our best to use public domain hymns or are cleared by the composer. This can be tricky as composers make new decisions and it is disappointing when a cherished hymn simply is not available. We remain vigilant about using recordings of songs, obtaining the composers permission, and paying a fair price as necessary. This means we have to continue following copyright laws. We need to seek permission to use hymns and be willing to pay to include them in our broadcasts. We also need to purchase a renewable music performance license that will allow all of our musicians to perform in services and for the church to broadcast live services. But, before we can do that, we must first launch our broadcasts from our own website. A peculiarity of the license and of copyright is that we cannot obtain a license that shields us when we broadcast first on Facebook or YouTube. To be in compliance, we must broadcast first from a UU owned website and then

Happily, all of this is in the process of coming to fruition. We see the need to continue broadcasting services even after we resume in-person services. In a few months, we should be completely compliant with copyright laws, just in time to welcome our new minister. I hope this explains why presently, we do not use some hymns, we do not want any person to text hymn lyrics into the chat during our Facebook services, and we are not using a variety of the very fine music videos that are available on YouTube.

Hearing Enhancement Coming to Sanctuary

When we return to in-person services, one major improvement will be the addition of a Hearing Loop System to the Sanctuary. This is the gold standard in hearing technology, and offers excellent sound quality to anyone with hearing difficulties, whether or not you wear a hearing aid. Here's what you need to know.

Does it use headphones? I don't want to wear them.

Now, you won't have to. Our new technology means the purest, clearest sound from the microphone will go straight into your hearing aids.

I have hearing aids already and can hear ok. Is this enhancement helpful?

Absolutely! We now have a world-class system allowing you to receive the clearest sound possible. Check with your audiologist to see if you have a T-coil in your hearing aids. If so, once it's turned on, the sound will go straight from the microphone into your hearing aids (wirelessly with no equipment at all). Nobody will know but you.

Is the T-coil expensive?

Good news – you may already have a T-coil in your hearing aids. All cochlear implants have a T-coil. If so, you'll just need to learn how to turn it on. With certain hearing aids, you may have the option of a device that clips on your shirt and does the same thing. Ask your audiologist how to use the Hearing Loop System at church. They'll help you find what will work. If your hearing aids can accommodate a T-coil, it may be free or could range in price up to about \$150. The Hearing Enhancement Task Force can help you with the cost.

this, and they just use the general-purpose program all the time. Usually there are buttons to push, or controls on your smartphone to change the program. The T-coil program cuts off all background noise and allows only the sound from the microphone in its purest form to go directly into your hearing aid(s.) The T-coil receives that sound from the microphone and that sound only.

After you speak with your audiologist, if you have questions about your individual needs, including help with paying for the T-coil, contact August Calabrese, Linda Piantieri, or Amy Fairweather at the church office.



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