

CVUUF Transitional Ministry Task Force Report

March 2010



STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In light of the announced retirement of Rev. Betty Stapleford in June, the CVUUF Board of Trustees decided last December to form a Transitional Ministry task force to gather information, study the options, and make recommendations for our next step in ministry. The task force included co-chairs Paul Chavez and Merlin Snider, Lorella Hess, Laure McKinnon, Jo Ann Van Renan, Don Venardos, and Matthew Weisman.

SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

This report details the process we followed, includes summaries of interviews with Council Directors, RE teachers, Lay Ministers, and leaders of congregations who have gone through transitional ministry. It also includes notes from the February 14 Communicators Meeting as well as several other Appendices. The report concludes with our recommendations.

OUR PROCESS

In order to achieve the goal of gathering as much information as possible to present to the board, we first broke down the various choices we were looking into.

Our options included hiring a new settled minister, a full-time interim minister, a part-time consulting minister and hiring ministers to give sermons as needed (pulpit supply). We also looked at using our lay minister program for an extended period.

We set aside the idea of using the lay ministers unless it was for a very short (stop-gap) period of time.

Going directly to a settled minister is not usually recommended but from time to time that idea was brought up to be considered if an extraordinary situation should offer itself.

We centered our research on the remaining choices and assigned members of the task force to gather data in a variety of ways. We collected data from the UUA in the form of written reports and interviews. We interviewed other congregations to find out how they handled similar situations and what results were obtained.

Input was also gathered through interviews with The Board, The Council, the RE Teachers, a sampling of members of the congregation and others. We each read the “Transitional Ministry Handbook” by the Transitions Office of the UUA. We held a Communicators Meeting on February 14 to gather input from the congregation and answer questions. Ken Brown, District Executive of PSD was also contacted. Reverend Betty submitted a comprehensive letter outlining her views on the matter and we are enclosing that in this report.

While accumulating this data we considered all the budget implications of each of our choices, how our needs for growth and retention of membership would be impacted and what kind of a timeline we would have for each option.

While gathering all this information the task force met together three times in order to check in on what we have learned and to determine what adjustments to our methods might be needed.

The following report collects all our data and the various conclusions we have made.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS WITH UU CONGREGATIONS

Tapestry, Emerson, and Solana Beach have used both interims and consultants; Phoenix and Santa Monica (so far) used interims only between settled ministers. Santa Monica and Tapestry are still in transition. Only Phoenix and Emerson (the second time) were able to make the transition between settled ministers with just one interim.

Interviews of three congregations by Laure McKinnon

Following are the questions asked of three UU congregations of comparable size to CVUUF: Phoenix AZ, Solana Beach CA, and Emerson UU in Canoga Park CA.

Why did you choose an interim minister?

Did you consider any other option; i.e. consulting, ‘fill the pulpit’ or lay ministry. If so, why didn’t you select that option?

Did you have specific situations you were dealing with that required outside expert help? If so, did you get that help?

What were the positive/negative outcomes of the interim period?

Did any people leave?

All three congregations believed it best to hire an interim minister for a one to two year period. They had mixed results in achieving their goal. All three congregations experienced at least a three-year ‘interim’ period before their settled minister was

called. There were difficulties finding and keeping interim or consulting ministers for the amount of time needed to find a satisfactory settled minister.

Phoenix, AZ – 3-year interim period.

They chose an interim because they had problems (had been running a deficit for several years, membership was down from approx. 350 to 250, and there were divisions in the congregation). They did not consider a consulting minister because they wanted a professional specifically trained to deal with difficult situations.

At the end of a 2-year interim period, they were unable to find a qualified minister. Hired another interim for 1 year after which they obtained a good settled minister. During the interim period, all their problems were resolved and the membership returned to 347.

Solana Beach – 3-year interim period

They wanted an interim minister, but were unable to find one. Their finances and membership were stable....they just needed 'someone to keep the lights on.'

Since they couldn't find an interim, they hired a consulting minister. He was OK for preaching 2 to 3 Sundays a month and for emergencies, but did not provide any other support. He left after 8 months. The congregation wanted more support so they decided to hire a 1-year interim minister. At the end of this period they were unable to find a settled minister, so they hired another interim for 1 year. There was a notable sense of loss after the settled minister left, and the interims were able to help resolve this issue. After the second interim, they found a good settled minister.

Emerson UU – Two experiences with interim ministry: The first lasted 4 years, the second 1-year.

1992 – They chose an interim minister who did not work out. After the interim left, they hired two consulting ministers consecutively. During this period, the Northridge earthquake destroyed their building. The consulting ministers (older retired people) provided Sunday services, but were not helpful with other issues, which had to be addressed by the congregation alone. In 1996 they got an extension minister and in 2000 she was called to be the settled minister.

2001 – Their settled minister resigned and they hired an interim minister to help with the transition. All previous issues had been resolved by the settled minister. Their interim experience was a good one.

ANOTHER CONGREGATION'S EXPERIENCE

Report by Lorella Hess on Mission Viejo (Tapestry) about 150 members:

1) Interim minister last year was very helpful in bringing closure to feelings about the

last minister, who had been very involved with most aspects of congregational life. This was the interim's focus.

2) Tapestry is now working with a full-time consulting minister who is more focused on providing direction. He brings excellent business skills to the table, with an emphasis on best practices, growth, and assessment of key leadership positions.

3) The congregation lost a few members during the interim period. Some of them have come back to check out the consulting minister, who is also an outstanding preacher.

4) Connie Pursell (President) is willing to share with us the questions Tapestry developed for interviewing interim minister candidates.

RE TEACHER INTERVIEWS

By Don Venardos

One RE teacher from each class was interviewed and the RE teachers were asked two questions:

If we are forced to go to a part-time minister how would this affect you as an RE teacher?

As a member how would it affect you?

In answering the first question the RE teachers were unanimous in stating that not having a full-time minister would not have an adverse affect on their RE program. They stated that the minister is not involved in the RE program and RE is very independent. They were also unanimous in stating that if there was an impact on the DRE, or if the DRE's hours were cut, there would be a tremendous negative effect on the RE program. One teacher mentioned that the DRE has been considering retiring in the next few years and that if the DRE left during the period when we did not have a full-time minister there would be a huge gap to be filled.

In response to the second question all but one of the teachers was very concerned about not having a full-time minister and how that would impact our growth, pledge income, community, stress on our lay ministers and volunteers, and about the services that only a professional can (and should) supply. One teacher was very strong in expressing the lack of community, continuity, and stability that would result from not having a full-time minister. Another teacher, the lone contrarian opinion, felt that if we needed to go through a period without a full-time minister that it would not have a significant impact and if that is what we needed to do, it would not have a negative affect from a personal point of view

LAY MINISTERS INTERVIEWS

(Jo Ann Van Renan)

Jo Ann Van Renan reports: I spoke to 13 people who have been through all or part of the lay ministry training. Of these, four have done worship services on their own, that is the sermon, reading selections with some help from others. Many have done parts of services, new member induction, etc. Three have done weddings, memorial

services, house blessings .Five have done pastoral care but usually with people they know. Three are involved in R.E. or in mentoring young people. Two are in leadership roles currently. Two of the 13 have health issues that limit their availability to do more than they are doing. One has had family issues that were limiting her availability but she wants to do more now. Two of the lay ministers, Jill Schlaus and Theadora Davitt-Cornyn have seminary training.

It's pretty clear that the lay ministers are ready to assist a minister but certainly not to take the place of one. I'm told that they are going to be asked to sign a contract that defines their role in the fellowship. They have done this previously but will do it again prior to the arrival of our minister.

COUNCIL INTERVIEWS

By Merlin Snider

On February 2-3, 2010 I interviewed 6 members of the Council on the prospects for transitional ministry after Rev. Betty's retirement. The assumption was that members had either read the Transitional Ministry Handbook or were at least familiar with the distinction between Interim Minister and Consulting Minister discussed in the handbook. The interviews focused on four areas of concern: 1) What are the priorities in transitional ministry, that is what do you think we need in our next transitional minister? 2) Do you favor Interim Ministry or Consulting Ministry? What role should the budget deficit play in the decision? 3) How do you assess the role of lay ministry in the filling in the pieces of ministry should we go to part time ministry? 4) And the discussion naturally often moved toward growth issues. Here is a summary of the interviews.

In sum, all the Directors recommend hiring a full time minister, if at all possible. The feeling was that lay ministers, while fulfilling a needed role, are not ready to fill the role of pastoral care or pulpit ministry that a full time minister would be able to do. All also agreed that close attention should be paid to the budget deficit and that it would not be responsible to "roll the dice" and run the cash reserves to zero or below a reasonable working capital level.

There was also general agreement that growth is critical for the financial health of the fellowship and that a strong pulpit presence would be a key factor toward this end. It is hoped that growth will be realized in the interim period. The individual interviews are summarized in Appendix A.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

CVUUF's current budget position is not sustainable. We are running a deficit this year of around \$95K. Our operating expenses are roughly \$32K/month and by July we will be down to 3 months' working capital. The responsible minimum for working

capital is generally considered to be 3-6 months of expenses. Because our budget has already been severely prioritized, the only ways to reduce expenses significantly are by staff cuts or by abandoning our site. A maximum budget deficit for next year should not exceed \$25K, assuming that the tax situation gets resolved.

The goal of the current canvass is to determine what level of programming Fellowship members will support. It is the Board's responsibility to work within the limit of reasonable financial parameters, weighing a number of factors including canvass results, the likelihood that the transitional period before our next settled minister will last multiple years, and the likelihood that either a general economic upturn or a specific growth in membership will substantially change canvass results in immediate future years.

Because ministers' compensation is theoretically scalable, it is tempting to assume we can just plug in any number and see what that buys us. However it is important to note that while a minister's cost, whether interim or consulting, ranges from full time @ about \$90K to 1/8 time @ about \$12K, we are more likely to actually fill the position at the higher end of the range. And conversely, it would be far easier for us to schedule 12 star-quality guest ministers @ \$12K than 36 @ \$36K even though the cost/Sunday is the same.

Therefore we recommend the following general guidance. A new full-time minister should be somewhat less expensive than our retiring minister because of a general retreat among PSWD congregations toward the low end of the UUA's fair compensation guidelines (CVUUF currently pays near the middle of the table). Given that, the Hesses' parsonage offer (for an interim or consulting minister employed by CVUUF at least ¾-time), and a maximum deficit of \$25K for next year, we believe other current CVUUF programs can be sustained with a **canvass total around \$285k**. With less money, the Fellowship cannot support its current programming and must seek the best achievable balance between ministerial and other expenses. With more money, the Fellowship can attract a larger pool of ministerial candidates by offering a housing allowance instead of a distant parsonage, can expand other programming in the hope of attracting future growth to fund a housing allowance in future years, or can run a smaller deficit next year to preserve more options going forward.

SUMMARY

The closer we come to finding a high quality full time minister with the range of skills we need to help us address our challenges of growth and financial sustainability the better our chances of success in these areas. And that depends on our financial health.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A) We suggest that the Board create a financial plan that includes a sustainable budget for the next three years (minimum). This plan will be the guideline to determine the next ministerial options.
- B) The individual person is more important than the type (interim or consulting). We want as much of a minister as we can afford whether interim or consulting
- C) We believe in the interim process as described by the UUA TRANSITIONAL MINISTRY HANDBOOK and recommend following through with the application for interim ministry.
 - a. If the financial plan does not initially afford a full time interim minister, we suggest that the Board go back to the congregation with specific financial requirements to afford a full time interim minister.
 - b. Following the process is recommended but it is important to select someone who can help our financial situation and with growth.
- D) A consulting minister is acceptable if we do not find an acceptable or affordable interim minister. In this case we would recommend the following:
 - a. A search committee may begin immediately to consider the consulting minister as a full time minister. Note: Under the UUA “inside candidate” rule, a minister who is a member or staff member of a congregation may not accept a call after the Transitions Office has submitted a list to the search committee. Thus an inside candidate must apply to the search committee early in the process, and the search committee must make a yes-or-no decision before considering other candidates. In other words, the consulting minister can only be considered alone and not in competition with other ministers.
 - b. We recommend not calling a full time minister for at least 12 months.
 - c. Offer an annual contract to the consulting minister.
 - d. Set congregational finance and growth goals for a full time consulting minister.
 - e. Contract that calls for a congregational vote in two years.
- E) Pulpit supply should be considered only as a short term, stop-gap measure

APPENDIX A
COMMUNICATORS MEETING
February 14, 2010

Brief presentation by Task Force followed by questions and comments from the congregation.

Theodora Davitt-Cornyn: Described a situation in a San Francisco UU Fellowship where in spite of hardship, the congregation decided to provide for a long-term interim minister because they believed it was the best thing to do. After hearing about this, she decided to double her pledge.

Betty Stapleford: Are there other sources than pledging to make up the deficit?
Answer: Yes there are. Fund-raising is one and is included in the calculation.

David Barker: The contribution guide in the Task Force presentation only shows the lowest giving level. People may be willing to give more if asked to do so and shown the full range of contribution levels.
Answer: This was just an example. The pledge literature shows the other levels.

Jill Schlaus: We need a discussion of exactly what the minister does. Could that be provided?
Answer: The minister provides a whole host of things that most people don't see. They include pastoral care, social action, interfaith activities, UUA, worship committee, RE classes, leading other discussion groups, not to mention emergencies. Most work 50 to 60 hours a week.
Betty's presence in the community is everywhere.

Don Parker: Are there extraordinary expenses for interim ministers not shown in the presentation?
Answer: Moving expenses are the only extra item, which is not shown here.

David Barker: What about housing? Are we likely to find a minister who is housed in the area?
Answer: Housing is a part of the compensation package. We come up with a total package but it's up to the minister to say how it's divided between wages and housing. It's a personal tax issue.

Dana Ryon: Lay ministers are willing to step up during the transition to help. However, they do a lot already and while they are willing to help, they cannot do it all.

Carol Robinson: It appears the task force and the members are in agreement on the need to select an interim minister. If that decision is made before the pledge drive is over and we come up short, what then?

Answer: There are other options we could consider besides a full time interim. It is difficult to depend on predictions. The task force is recommending submitting an application for an interim in order to be eligible for that process which begins in April. The pledge drive will be completed by then so that a decision can be made. The Board won't make a decision until we get a better grip on the pledging.

Paul Chavez: Observed that there is a small pool of consulting ministers with varying skill levels.

Pamela Lopez: Is in favor of an interim minister. Believes we would incur a loss of members without the stability and consistency of a full time interim minister.

Theodora Davitt-Cornyn: Is there anyone here who can talk to interim ministerial training?

Answer: It is a multi-year program. All interim ministers are expected to do it. It is a two to three year rigorous process. Interims also have different skill sets. John Weston, UUA Transition Office, knows of people who are available who would be a fit for CVUUF.

Willie Lubka: Firmly supports the option of an interim minister if we can afford it. The big issue is, can we afford it? A number of people aren't really aware of what the stakes are. It would be wonderful if during this canvass period, everybody could be made more aware.

Bob Holtz: He thinks people in the congregation can step up and get the job done. We need to get the word out. We need people who can do more than just talk.....we need people who can step up and take on the work.

Don Venardos: We have discussed what our biggest concern is and we all agree that the interim minister is the best option for us. Even though I feel like there are people in the congregation who would like to and would be willing to fill in some of the gaps, I know that there are many other things that would be lost without an interim.

Penny Smith: Is pleased to see this information and is willing to raise her pledge to help select an interim minister. She hopes that this information can be made available to others who may not be aware of the importance of making the right decision. Also, when will the decision between interim and consulting minister be made and is there an overlap between the interim and Betty?

Answer: the Task Force makes a recommendation to the Board. The Board decides. Based on UUA recommendations for the transition period, there will be no overlap between the interim and Betty.

Liza Diniakos: Is in favor of an interim minister. Is there such a thing as a part time interim? If we take out an amount for the full time minister, it would create problems in the future because we would have to fundraise the difference.

Answer: According to Ken Brown at PSWD, there may be an option for a part time interim minister.

Floyd Martin: Supports a full time interim minister. We really should follow UUA guidelines in this process. His brother-in-law is in a UU congregation in Scottsdale AZ. Their congregation was in serious difficulty when the minister left. They selected an interim who rebuilt the membership and finances and literally turned the church around during his tenure.

Paul Chavez: Explained that the task force looked at the finances in a very basic way. The significant expenses boil down to the buildings and the minister. They are so intertwined in how they impact the viability of the ongoing fellowship, that it is not possible to separate them. Our responsibility is to determine how to give more so we can afford the option we want.

Linda Delorey: Growth was the underlying assumption for getting into this building. It's really important to get someone who can promote this.

Don Parker: Does the interim minister have anything to do with selecting the settled minister?

Answer: The interim helps with the transition period only.

Phoebe Rivera: Overall what do people know? It was not until the training for canvassers that she started to get a clear picture. Can this information be put out to everyone in the congregation? Many are oriented toward the cost and don't understand the full impact of this change.

Answer: The willingness to accept a \$25,000 deficit was an effort to bridge the gap between those concerned about the cost and those willing to hire an interim regardless of the deficit. The task force will refine the information and put it on the website.

Annie Barker: The same people come to all these meetings. It's only a portion of the entire congregation. How can we get this message out to all those who don't attend the meetings and are not fully aware of the high stakes here? We all need to reach out to those that don't attend and spread the message.

Pamela Lopez: On the list of expenses, she does not see any area that is expendable and frankly is not willing personally to give any one of them up. She hopes we are all willing to step up to an increase in our pledges to make this possible.

Betty Stapleford: One of the things we should consider with the consulting minister is the fact that their contract has no limit and the congregation can call them. She knows of a congregation that hired a consulting minister who later in the consulting period decided they wanted to stay on as a full-time settled minister. This led to an unhealthy division in the church and the subsequent departure of the consulting minister. They ended up hiring an interim minister until a settled minister could be found.

Jill Schlaus: The interim is not allowed to help choose the settled minister, but they are supposed to help us decide what we need.

Carol Robinson: Recently talked to visitors from the Santa Monica congregation who had been running a 22% deficit. They conducted a highly successful pledge campaign with the resulting increase of 22.8% in pledging. In suggesting individual contribution increase amounts, it is better to talk in terms of percentages rather than dollars.

Arlene Bloom: Selecting a settled minister is a very important function. A Ministerial Search Committee will conduct the process. The members of this committee will be nominated by the Nominating Committee and selected by vote of the congregation.

Jeff Goldstein: The process of planning for this building did have some creative financing. We planned for a three-year deficit program. We expected growth and didn't anticipate the recession. We now have a much bigger deficit than expected. We can only do this if we can afford to do it. However, he believes we are closer than we realize. Based on information after two weeks of the pledge campaign, people are increasing their pledges.

Matthew Weisman: When we started the Community Forum, we figured it would take at least five years to get it going really well. Things take a while to get started and they planned for the long haul. What's so different here anyway? We would be paying for Betty next year if she were not retiring.

Barbara Leighton: Speaking from two such experiences at Emerson UU, the transition time is really important to help the congregation realize they can go on. If you downplay that and don't provide for support during this time, serious problems can occur.

Penny Smith: We should put the pros and cons for each option on the website.

APPENDIX B

COUNCIL DIRECTORS INTERVIEWS AT GREATER LENGTH

Telephone interviews conducted February 2-3, 2010

INTERVIEW 1

This person said it's not an easy decision and a lot depends who the candidates are. What will be the impact on growth? Again, it's hard to say until we know the person. The individual is more important than the title, whether Interim or Consulting. S/he recommends using the input of the Ministerial Settlement Representative (MSR) at the PSWD.

This Council member recommends three criteria in making the decision. 1) The budget deficit should be the guiding factor. 2) Growth is a key issue, and 3) "I would like to hear some really good sermons." But s/he qualifies, that "you can't get everything."

Until reading the ministry transition handbook this Council member did not consider Consulting but now thinks it is a reasonable option.

In sum, S/he says, "I trust you guys. Do the best you can and we'll support your decision."

INTERVIEW 2

"Making a recommendation to the board and the board making a decision in the same day is not realistic," said this member.

We have several challenges: 1) financial. 2) Lack of growth. 3) Tension and conflict in the congregation. To address these issues and if money is not an issue, we should hire an Interim Minister for a two year term. One year is not enough. To get beyond the 200-member threshold we need a dynamic, charismatic presence. And we need someone with managerial experience.

Example: The Palos Verdes church had a membership of 200 souls. The congregation grew with an Interim Minister and continued to grow with the next (settled) minister [current membership is about 350].

This person doubts we have the skills and numbers of lay ministers to do the work we need to have done.

But if the money is not there, look for option, s/he says, look for option 2 – we shouldn't roll the dice and run the cash reserves down to zero. It is going to have to be a financially driven decision.

In the meantime, to keep our options open we should put in the application for the Interim Minister, since we do not need to make a commitment yet.

INTERVIEW 3

This person says we have so many challenges and we don't have the skills to handle them. Challenges such as 1) Financial. 2) Growth. 3) Factions in the church. In many ways we are two churches. A family church that is focused on RE and a non-family church of older members. A church that leans toward the spiritual and a church that doesn't. In general, many people are not connected to the church as a whole.

S/he says we need a full time Interim Minister. If we go to a part time Consulting Minister we will lose a large portion of people, especially the larger givers. Volunteers are already taxed to the limit and won't be able to fill all the responsibilities.

Regarding Pulpit Supply, someone who comes to speak only will have no connection to the congregation. There will be no follow-up with visitors or members that a full time minister provides.

Therefore, s/he says, "I think we need a full time Interim Minister. How long? I want to say one year, but we have a lot of work to do. You'll need at least six months to get anything at all done, so it should be for two years."

INTERVIEW 4

Initially, this person believed that Consulting was the way to go, but now thinks hiring an Interim will provide better odds of getting a consistent dynamic Sunday morning experience.

The Sunday morning experience is the most visible part of the Fellowship's work, s/he said. "The Sunday experience is critical to bringing people back Sunday after Sunday. . . . We need a consistent, dynamic speaker."

This person suggested the possibility of including a bonus provision in the Interim Minister's contract. If the fellowship's membership increases, the bonus would kick in. The contract could also include an opt-out clause for the second year, whereby if the Fellowship's financial growth expectations are not realized the contract could be terminated.

INTERVIEW 5

This individual recommends an option other than Interim or Consulting—hiring a part time person with skills in the area of church growth, because we can fill the pulpit for a lot less money than the Interim option and probably for less than a Consulting.

S/he thinks it will be "extraordinarily difficult to commit to an Interim Minister in our financial condition."

But, yes, if the budget deficit is alleviated we should go for an Interim. We should find the best pulpit person. It does have an impact on whether people come back and stay. But s/he says it doesn't have to be the same person every week.

However, if we hire an Interim Minister with no growth and use up our reserves we'll use up our reserves in one to two years and will lose our building.

INTERVIEW 6

This person said we need a seasoned, experienced leader, hopefully an Interim Minister. Putting more responsibility in the hands of volunteers would not be advisable. Firstly, because we are short on them; secondly, our volunteers do not have the skills to fulfill ministerial roles, or at least not all of them.

Perhaps we could categorize the roles and determine which ones volunteers could do, and which ones could not. Having the lay ministers taking over roles currently filled by the full time minister would be "leadership by committee," and we need a leader.

The pulpit supply option is not recommended by this person, which s/he calls the "grab bag approach." Sunday mornings would lack coherence or continuity. Different speakers each week would be like a variety show—perhaps interesting, but it would be lacking in continuity and not conducive to growth. Newcomers come in and need to see that it will be similar each week. But we can do both. We have variety now in the Community Forum. On Sundays we need consistency.

"Right now we don't have a tone, a core." That changes with each new President and Board. We need a minister with experience at being a leader to establish a tone and core identity, to lead in a direction.

But a lot of this discussion, s/he said, "is academic until we know who we're are talking about. It depends on the real resumes and individuals that come in."

If the budget problems continue, we should not spend the money. In that case we have to ask the hard questions: What would we do without a full time minister? And how long before we could get back up to the point where we could be able to afford one.

Finally, s/he suggested we talk to the worship committee and other committees to get their take on these questions and the whole issue.

APPENDIX C

THREE AT LENGTH INTERVIEWS FROM OTHER CONGREGATIONS

Gary Ezzell, former president, UU Congregation, Phoenix AZ

They currently have a 347-member congregation and have had a settled minister for about two years. Gary's term as president occurred during the interim and selection period.

After the resignation of the previous minister, they engaged an interim minister for a two-year term. At the end of that period, they were unable to obtain a settled minister and then hired a different interim minister for an additional year bringing the total interim period to three years. They never considered any other option than an interim minister.....they felt the issues they were dealing with required trained professional leadership if they were to survive.

Prior to this time, they had been experiencing declining membership (down from about 350 to 250) and had been running a deficit for several years. In addition to declining membership, and a budget deficit, they had a culture of 'systemic contention'. There were some issues with their minister who had resigned because of his/her inability to move forward with the problems the congregation was facing.

During their 3-year interim period all of these problems were reversed. They decided to treat themselves as a start up company and make needed changes in church functions and physical property. They wrote a five-year strategic plan focused on building community and based on the accomplishments of the Jefferson UU Fellowship in Colorado (whose video has been used at CVUUF). During the interim period they completely changed the culture from one of contention to one of unity. They focused on becoming a warm and welcoming congregation. A key program in this process was the establishment of an Engagement Committee. As part of the new member process, this committee provided a survey form of interests and skills. This had a dual purpose of matching individual skill sets with volunteer committee needs and more importantly encouraging early participation in small group ministry. As a result of their efforts, they increased membership back up to its current level of 347 and at the end of last year, their budget was balanced.

Some notes on the relative merits of the two interim ministers. The second interim minister was more effective and the greatest period of growth occurred during her tenure. She was a trained interim and had the additional benefit of a husband who was deeply involved in working with the membership committee. The first interim minister was not accredited (through the UUA training program), instead, she was a regular parish minister who was between jobs. Gary believes that the congregation stabilized under the first minister, but really took off with the second who had a much better understanding of the issues involved in transition was able to identify specific problems. He also believes this was why they were able to get a first class minister during the second search.....the congregation had solved its problems and therefore, was more attractive because they didn't have a multitude of issues to fix.

Gary did not feel there were any real negatives in this process and no losses.

--Laure McKinnon 2/4/2010

Sharilyn Parr, Solana Beach, CA

Solana Beach has 230 members, 175 pledging units.

Sharilyn's term as president occurred during a three-year interim period. The minister at Solana Beach gave notice in May for a September resignation leaving the congregation little time to search for a replacement. It was their intention to obtain an interim minister, but none were available. During this period finances and membership were stable. They had been trying to grow but with little success. They just needed 'someone to keep the lights on' and assist in the transition to a settled minister.

With Ken Brown's assistance, they were able to get a consulting minister. The consulting minister's work in the pulpit was satisfactory but his contribution as a whole was limited. He had another job and was only available for part time work. During his stay, he preached two or three sermons a month and was on call for 'emergencies' which included deaths, serious personal crises, etc., but did not participate at all in operational issues, with the result that many tasks fell to the Board, the staff and volunteers. There was no supervision of staff. This was not a satisfactory arrangement for the congregation and he stayed for only eight months.

The congregation engaged an interim for a one-year period to provide more support and to assist in finding a settled minister, but at the end of that time, they were unable to find a good fit. The first interim was not available for a second year, so they hired a different interim. Sharilyn said that the selection process for interims was not entirely satisfactory. The number of interims was limited. They did not really have a choice in the matter.....they just accepted the individual Ken Brown sent them. There were frustrations during the interim period as well. The interim ministers, although trained and accredited, were retired ministers who were reluctant to make big decisions. Instead they wanted to wait until the settled minister arrived.

In describing the whole experience, she said 'it was brutal.' Many in the congregation had loved the resigning minister and felt she had been driven off by a dissatisfied faction. They did lose people. Membership was down for about a year but recovered. The interim did help with the healing process and they have a strong membership committee who were able to help in the recovery. She did say that even with an interim, the volunteers ended up taking on more than normal.

Her most significant criticism of the process was the bureaucratic tangle.....the packages requiring research, the delays in various stages of the selection.....she felt it took way too long to work through this. The positive aspect was that 'they survived and got a great settled minister.'

--Laure McKinnon 2/4/2010

**Connie Pursell, president (was VP of Operations during interim)
Tapestry UU Congregation in Mission Viejo**

about 150 members, in transition between small & midsize.
Interim minister last year, consulting minister this year

Former minister had given notice he was moving to a church in Massachusetts and told the board to get an interim because “this is the way it works.” We just followed the established process. Some people did want to try a lay-led interval with many outside speakers, but the previous minister was very involved in mentoring, committee work, and pastoral care, and the board felt that those expectations could not be met by lay leaders. Many older members wanted the security of having clergy available for hospital visits, funerals. Interim also helped congregation get over its sense of loss over the former minister’s departure, got us past our grieving process.

Congregation lost a few members during the interim. Some of them are coming back now to check out the consultant minister.

On the whole, the interim was “absolutely a good thing” for Tapestry.

Outstanding issue: Tapestry had been in merger talks with a nearby smallish congregation. Those talks were suspended because of the recession (probably more than because of the interim) but may eventually be resumed.

Consultant minister has brought more business skills to the table: emphasis on best practices, growth, assessment of key leadership positions. More direction from the consultant, vs. interim more focused on getting closure to feelings remaining about the former minister.

Connie is willing to share with us the list of questions they made for interviewing interim candidates (phone interviews with 3 ministers).

-orella Hess 2-8-10

APPENDIX D

COMMENTS FROM PACIFIC SOUTHWEST DISTRICT REVEREND KEN BROWN TO PAUL CHAVEZ

"Paul,

It took me a couple days to get the promised information together but here is what I came up with --

Recent interims in the District:

UU Congregation of Phoenix -- president during the transition was Gary Ezzell, 480-419-6195, Ezzell.Gary@mayo.edu

Solana Beach -- Sharilyn Parr, 858-720-0727, sharilyparr@sbcglobal.net

Rancho Palos Verdes -- Ed Slizewski, 310-891-0188, ed@slizewski.com

Santa Barbara -- larger but might be worth contacting -- Gary Welterlen, 805-682-5275, gwelterlen@cox.net

Every congregation in transition in the PSWD from full-time ministry to full-time ministry in over 20 years has used an interim. In fact a couple congregations moving from part-time to full time have used interims as well.

Recent congregations not using interims, their leadership should be listed in the UUA Directory which should be in your Fellowship's office, if you have trouble let me know and I will dig to find information (this is from John Weston in Boston):

Birmingham AL is in the midst of a year of going without after the minister's resignation after two years

Hamilton ON after the minister's abrupt resignation after 15 or so years
Church of the Restoration in Philadelphia went without for a year following the minister's negotiated resignation

There are no congregations in your size range using consulting ministers that either John or I could think of -- consulting ministers in this District have all been part-time positions, if you want to talk to a couple folks let me know. The only two consulting ministers working in a transition are both special circumstances where the District Executive and John Weston worked out a deal with the congregation for a consulting minister who could stay 3-5 years to help them through particular situations. Both of these are full-time positions filled by people who have done interim work so there is no money savings.

There are no written reports at the UUA with statistics on success or what has happened in congregations that have gone without an interim since there have been

so few. The fact that 99-100% of UU congregations choose interims in any given year says something. The information on growth, budget implications, etc. is all anecdotal. The majority of congregations in the PSWD grew both in membership and budget during their interim time. Although I would not guarantee that this would happen everywhere.

One piece of additional information is that large congregations have looked at other options -- 1st Portland went without an interim but they had a second minister and a very large staff including affiliate ministers; 1st Universalist in Minneapolis looked at going without an interim senior minister but decided to go with an interim even though they had a second minister and are glad they did; and 1st Dallas moved their Associate into the Senior position when the Senior left.

Not sure what your question about timeline is about but in talking to the congregational leaders I have listed you will see congregations have had anywhere from one to three years of interims before calling a settled minister.

I'll keep digging, let me know if there is any other information you need."

[Ed. Note: The following comment by Lorella Hess may be pertinent: "In the report's current first section on consulting ministers, the long quote from Ken Brown contradicts itself (and our own interviews). Consulting positions cannot have all been part-time since there are currently at least two full-time consultants. And we know at least 3 PSWD congregations around our size have used both interim and consulting ministers. Because "consulting" is defined negatively ("not interim or settled"), every such relationship is unique. Whether a congregation was successful with interims or consultants seems to be more a function of the ministers themselves than which label they wore. And of course the same individual can wear either label depending on the terms under which he or she is hired."]

APPENDIX E

Letter from Rev. Betty to the CVUUF Board, Council, & Stewardship Committee

Hello, All!

As I stated last evening, I am greatly disturbed by the idea of presenting part-time consulting ministry to the congregation as a positive option for CVUUF. I do not mean that the leaders of the congregation should not discuss it together but that we should not present it to the congregation officially without knowing all the facts.

Below are the reasons I believe we must have an interim minister next year.

- Interim Ministers are trained and experienced in leading congregations through transitions and challenges.
- They can support the congregation in looking at its strengths and weaknesses objectively.
- They can work with the congregation to determine its desires and needs for the future and its next settled minister.
- They provide full-service ministry – not part-time pulpit supply.
- Our Lay Ministers, however well they are trained, cannot provide the same expertise and experience as a professional minister.
- Consulting ministers generally serve congregations of less than 100 members, as they did for CVUUF when we were that size.
- All three congregations in our District that now have consulting ministers have fewer than 100 members.
- According to our District Executive, all of our congregations in transition in this District have had interims except one, and that congregation is currently in serious difficulty.
- The culture of “scarcity” in our congregation will be reinforced for our membership once again by a reduction in ministerial services, and it is likely that we will lose members.
- Growth is necessary for our survival in our current buildings, and cutting back in our ministry is not the way to do that.

If we are only concerned about holding on to scarce resources and turning inward to serve ourselves, a consulting minister might well sound like a good solution. But if we truly believe in supporting our stated vision of ourselves as a dynamic force for sharing our ministry and Unitarian Universalist values with the larger community, we would, in my opinion, be abandoning the reason we exist for the fear that we can't raise the money we need. I am convinced that we have the ability to support our vision of ourselves as a growing and thriving congregation if we are committed to that end.

I hope that you will seriously consider my perspective, and I will be glad to discuss it with anyone in person, not via e-mail.

Blessings and thanks,

Rev. Betty

APPENDIX F

REPORT BY LORELLA HESS TO THE TASK FORCE ON CONVERSATION WITH KEN BROWN REGARDING COMPENSATION

Dear friends,

I've talked with Ken Brown this morning re. ministerial compensation. He says at the moment most PSWD congregations are paying near the bottom of the UUA's fair compensation range. Boston wants to hold interim compensation at the midpoint, per the worksheet I sent earlier, but that's a tough line given the general state of the economy. So it could be realistic to think of an interim's annual cost as more like \$90K, rather than \$111K. No interims currently serving in the PSWD have young children, nearly half are single, and some are Medicare-eligible, so health insurance costs are more predictable than they might be otherwise.

Consulting ministry is a catch-all term which simply means the minister is neither interim nor settled, ranging from full time to 1/8-time. Compensation for consulting ministers is a straight prorating of the fair compensation table & worksheet: full-time consultants (rare) earn the same as interims, 1/2-timers earn 50%, 1/8-timers earn 12.5%. Most consulting ministries in the PSWD currently are between 1/2-time and 3/4-time. Consulting ministries are arranged through Ken's office--we do not approach people directly. He knows of 3-6 congregations (including ours) which might be in the consulting market this spring and currently knows of 2-3 ministers he would recommend, with potentially 3 others in the pool of possibilities, so the supply is tight. Some consulting ministers also have interim ministry training and experience. Most ministers who choose consulting work prefer to work with small congregations, and we are big to be using a consultant so that might work to our competitive disadvantage. On the other hand, being a bigger congregation means our compensation package should be correspondingly higher. People are not generally willing to move far for a consulting position, unlike interim ministry, which because it's full-time can draw from a national pool of applicants.

See you this evening,

-Lorella

[February 2, 2010]

Editorial Note: The task force learned along the way that while the PSWD encourages congregations to arrange for consulting ministers through their office, we are free to hire anyone we want, whether in fellowship with the UUA or not. The PSWD will assist us with contractual issues even if Ken and the office is not the "matchmaker," if the minister is in fellowship with the UUA, but otherwise they will not.

APPENDIX G

CANVASS QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

EXPLAIN – some Q & A

What is the financial goal of the canvass?

The financial goal is not numeric, but instead that **the canvass accurately measures the total financial commitment the Fellowship is willing to pay in support of our mission.** For 2009-10 we are running a \$95K deficit (before counting any extra money collected from increased pledges for next year that members might start paying in March). Relative to our current year programs, it could be viewed in either of two ways:

1. We would need to increase total pledges by \$95K to run the same expenses next year as this year, or
2. If the aggregate pledges equal those from 2009-10, that implies we would need to cut \$95K of expenses.

The most important result of the canvass is that we be able to know whether we are dealing with scenario 1, 2, something in between, or something more extreme.

How have we run a \$95K deficit?

We expected that with our new buildings we would grow in membership and pledge base enabling us to afford the cash flow demands of our site as well as maintaining all other programs. Instead, the membership and financial growth has been modest and by the end of this year the Fellowship will have used most of the cushion we had planned to use during that period of growth.

Could we possibly cut \$95K from our budget?

Yes, though it would necessarily affect staff or site since the other areas of the budget are too small for cuts there to make a big difference.. Here is a broad recap of our current year expenses and income not counting self funding items like retreats and special collections
(all figures in thousands):

Income

Contribution Income (pledges and plate):	\$250
Fundraisers (auction, scrip, misc)	30
Total income	\$280

Expenses

Mortgage on Fellowship Building (owned by CVUUF)	\$ 90
Lease of Sanctuary (owned by OCR Investors)	32
Other site costs (common fees, utilities, insurance, ...)	28
Total site costs	\$150
Personnel	
Minister (Salary, housing allowance, prof expenses, ...)	\$100
Music and Choir Directors	30

DRE and childcare providers	48
Payroll expenses and various	12
Total Staff costs	\$190
UUA and PSWD dues	\$ 15
All else (Sunday services, RE program, etc)	\$ 20
Total Expenses	\$375

Deficit **\$ 95**

What will happen when Betty retires?

The Fellowship will decide. The Board is busy investigating options. A major determinant of which of those options is financially feasible will be determined by this canvass.

There is a transition ministry committee that is investigating specific aspects of ministry options including the associated costs. They are considering options that would cost above \$100K and others that might cost in the low tens of thousands and others in between. Depending on the option chosen, a ministerial search committee will be recommended by the nominating committee to consider specific candidates, and again depending on the option, that choice may be subject to Fellowship vote.

Has the Fellowship tried to renegotiate mortgage terms?

In respect of the mortgage, we have done only gentle testing and determined that we would not be eligible for revisions. In fact, because of our deficit budget and the deterioration of the real estate market, we do not want to re-present our financials to the bank who would view us as a worse credit risk than when we first got the loan.

Can you describe our lease and whether we can reduce costs there?

The lease is a 7 year rental agreement with annual increases of about \$11K a year until the lease amount caps out at around \$70K a year which was considered the full market rate when the lease was originally agreed. We pay \$32K in the current year which is scheduled to go up to \$43K next year. There is a plan to approach the OCR Investors about altering the terms of the lease. The Fellowship can certainly point to a weak rental market and high vacancy levels, but the OCR investors will point out that the lease is already discounted. At any rate, those discussions will take place before the Board recommends a budget for 2010-11.

Won't we still have \$80K or more in the bank that would allow another deficit budget?

We do expect to have \$80K or more in the bank at the end of this fiscal year. That money is needed as working capital. Working capital of 3 to 6 months of operating expenses is considered the bare minimum, and we expect to be at or below that minimum by the end of the year. Working capital is needed for cash flow (e.g. expenses paid out sooner than income), unexpected expenses (e.g. insurance deductible for property damage) and to signal financial responsibility to people like our staff or institutions like our bank.

.....
tjh 1-30-2010

APPENDIX H

Compensation Calculator for computing the UUA-recommended range of compensation for a position in ministry

UUA Transitions Office
John H. Weston, Director
Minimum Midpoint Maximum

A. Compute the Range of Salary plus Housing Allowance (S&H)

The web-page address for the information needed to complete Part A below is

<http://www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/compensation/index.shtml>

1. Find the congregation's geo-index: go to the "2009 Geographic Wage Index Table," find the congregation's city and state, and enter its geo-index (1-5) here: 5
2. Determine the congregation's number of members: 200
3. Determine the congregation's size (from "small" to "large II") on the appropriate geo-index table (1-5) under "2008 Salary Recommendations" and check off here:
☐ Small <150 ☐ Mid-size III 350-499
☒ Mid-size I 150-249 ☐ Large I 500-749
☐ Mid-size II 250-349 ☐ Large II >750
4. Find the line of the ministry position (parish/senior/MRE, associate, assistant) **interim minister**
standard is "same as the midpoint"
5. Enter the minimum, midpoint, and maximum **Salary plus Housing Allowance** \$
\$ **76,300** \$

B. Compute the Benefits & Professional Expense Allowance

1. In Lieu of Employer's FICA: 7.65 percent of S&H \$ **5,836.95**
2. Retirement Plan: at least 10 percent of S&H **7,630**
3. Comprehensive Medical Insurance Plan: Employer Share of 80 percent
a. UUA Health Plan:
Enter the first three digits of the congregation's zip code: 913
Go to the UUA Health Insurance Premium Calculator at
<https://secure.uua.org/leaders/insurance/calculator/index.php>
Estimate a reasonable employee-only annual rate for planning purposes: _____
(a OR b) Enter the 80 percent employer share (the three figures will be identical): _____
11,478 **annual rate for 50-yo employee-only, std deductible**
b. Other health plan available in the congregation's region:
Enter a reasonable employee-only annual rate: _____
Enter the 80 percent employer share (the three figures will be identical): _____
4. UUA Group Disability (or other) Plan: 60 percent of S&H: 1 percent of S&H **763**
5. Group Term Life Insurance: 2 times S&H \$3.84 per year per \$1,000 of coverage
587.52
4. Professional Expense Allowance: the greater of 10 percent of S&H or \$5,000
(for transitional ministry add 1 percent for UUA-sponsored training event) **8,393**
5. Total UUA-Recommended **Benefits & Expenses** \$ **34,688.47**
- C. Total Congregational Cost (A+B)** \$ **110,988.47**