

## President's Message – September 2015

Fall is nearly upon us and things are already changing at SMUUCH.

A topic of interest to many in the congregation is our relationship with New Life School in Uganda. Some may know that this relationship recently ended, as requested by New Life School. This left SMUUCH with the funds we had collected for the purpose of supporting the children of the school, and no immediate alternative for outreach. Given that the funds were meant for children in Uganda, the Board wanted to find a similar organization to reach out to. Thanks to the resident expertise of Sarah Kessler in matters concerning the welfare of children in Uganda, the Board received a wonderful recommendation for a worthy organization: JAJJA Dez Psychosocial Support Services and Care (JADPSAC)

JADPSAC works with orphans and vulnerable children in Uganda to teach life skills that will help them support themselves in the absence of more traditional support structures (i.e. the loss of family), among other social and economic justice initiatives. JADPSAC will receive all of the funds previously allocated to New Life School as a one-time donation to educate, train and provide resources to those they work with in order to improve their ability to support themselves in the long term.

Closer to home, there has been increasing interest in SMUUCH hosting yoga classes to interested parties. While we have always been welcome to pursue spiritual practices that enhance our own personal faiths at SMUUCH, yoga tends to require some additional expertise in the form of instruction that is relatively rare within our membership to be provided on a continuing basis. After much deliberation, the Board has decided to allow instructors interested in leading classes for our members, friends, and visitors to collect *voluntary* donations as compensation for their time. Rachel Wathen as our Director of Religious Education, will have final say on those instructors acting as professionals providing this service to our congregation. Any classes are free of formal charge and open to all interested in attending. Ask Rachel for more details about currently vetted instructors and any current classes.

With an eye on upcoming change, we are in full swing with regard to our interim period and the search process for our next settled minister. Currently, the Board is completing the 1-year interim appraisal which will help focus discussions moving forward into our final year of the interim on which areas the church as a whole has done well with in the interim, and what still needs some improvement before our next settled minister arrives. Additionally, the Board will be undertaking a Leadership Retreat to revisit the Vision Statements adopted by SMUUCH some time ago. Since the Vision Statements predate our move (or even consideration of a move) to a new facility, the Board felt it would be a good idea to revisit them prior to forming our packet for prospective ministers to consider. Let a Board member know if there are specific aspects of any of these statements you feel need revision.

Speaking of the search, don't forget the Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop coming up on 9/27/2015. Change can be uncomfortable, but also a good thing for our continued growth as a faith community.

Zach Irwin  
Board President