



June 11, 2009

## Ministers Annual Report

It has been a true pleasure to serve Tapestry in this last year of Interim Ministry. As a newer minister I have felt encouraged and loved by the congregation. Tapestry's ability to respect your minister is unique and makes this community an incredible honor to then serve. And what a year it has been! Following are a few of the highlights in various areas of the congregational life.

### Justice:

This last year produced several recognitions for the culmination of work done in the past couple years. Tapestry was designated a Welcoming Congregation which comes after a year of congregational organizing and learning. By becoming welcoming, Tapestry set an official standard of being open to all people. A standard you can build upon as part of the congregational identity. Tapestry was also designated an official Green Sanctuary. This designation also came after a year of hard work and education, in which Tapestry committed to green values and practices. As a result the congregation was highlighted in the Unitarian Universalist Association's publicity campaign for ethical eating. The highlights included your volunteer work and giving at Second Harvest and the gleaning field trips for adults and children. Additionally, and most recently, Tapestry received a matching grant of \$2500 from the UUA to support your membership to Orange County Congregational Community Organizing group (OCCCO). This grant is recognition of the innovative relationship based justice work Tapestry leaped into last summer! Overall, the year was filled with honor for the hard working, loving, and justice focused community and carries forward much promise as commitment to the larger world continues.

### Membership:

Tapestry continues to welcome new visitors and members with vigor. The greeting, orientations, and visitor follow up is vibrant and consistent! Many people nobly volunteer to welcoming new people to Tapestry. Wonderful job! We currently have 151 members with several people expressing interest in membership in the coming year.

### Sunday Morning Worship:

The worship service was re-invigorated over the course of the year. This past year we changed some of the standard worship elements in the Sunday morning order of service. The changes were just enough to allow me to have ministerial investment in the worship. At the same time much of it remained the same to create a sense of standardization. We also added elements that remind us of the all we have to offer the world. The worship practice is poised for growth a vibrant worship life continues as central to Tapestry.

**Minister:** Rev. Mitra Rahnema

**Director of Religious Exploration:** Katelynn Hassler; **Office Administrator:** Mary Halunka

**Minister Emeritus:** Rev. Robert Jordan Ross

**President:** Tara Sayre; **VP Finance:** Julia Rampono; **VP Operations:** Connie Pursell

**Treasurer:** Carol Wheeler; **Secretary:** Laura Jackson; **Directors:** Richard Jagielko, Michael Boys, Mark Fox



### **Pastoral Care:**

The congregational care structure and culture is strong. The caring committee strengthened and deepened over the course of a year; holding more of what is and coming together quickly to help when needed. The committee carries a sense of abundance of care. The congregational pastoral needs of care and counseling revealed a need and encouragement for more in-depth conversation with each other. Listening to the heart and joining each others journey was a task of the whole community, and you embraced it!

### **Religious Education:**

Our religious education programming for children continues with strength. This past year we also built an adult religious education program. This included creating a committee, programming, developing procedures, advertising, recruiting teachers and facilitators, and offering support. Classes such as articulating your faith, simplicity circle, understanding grief, spiritual practices, and parent support were offered. Additionally we brought back covenant groups under the direction of the adult religious education committee, which were a wonderful success. The committee is going strong into the next year and poised to offer a wonderful slate of classes beginning in the fall. These will include a yoga class, a science discussion group, and new covenant groups. Look for opportunities to join!

### **Staff Transitions:**

In the spring we had a couple staff transitions. Mary Halunka left Tapestry after two years of wonderful service. Fortunately, we have been able to welcome Suzi Spangenberg as our new office administrator working fifteen hours a week. Suzi brings to Tapestry not only financial knowledge but experience of Unitarian Universalism organizational structures. Due to financial needs this past year we have also lowered our DRE, Katelynn Riva, hours to twenty hours a week. This change in hours provided her the opportunity to become the DRE at Orange Coast UU Church. Due to Katelynn's organizational abilities this transition has gone smoothly. Tapestry can move forward with a committed staff.

### **Interim Congregational Overview:**

The interim tasks this year were unique. I joined the congregation, learned Tapestry's history, asked you to begin to articulate your history and therefore identity. You mourned the loss of a beloved minister through story telling and sharing of memories. During this time the unique qualities of Tapestry were revealed. These qualities include Tapestry's individual and cultural experience of congregational mergers and a physical space that has its own story of growing and being cared for over the years, mirroring the growing community. Tapestry is beginning to understand yourselves as a home that has something to offer people discovering the community for the first time, no matter the location.



Internally, the community has strengthened in a personal way as you have risked sharing more of yourselves with each other. New leadership has also emerged. Committee's are more empowered to give themselves direction, individuals are seeking new ways of offering leadership, and four new people are coming onto the Board which is a wonderful balance of energy and institutional leadership!

The commitment that was made and affirmed in the May congregational meeting was a unique and savvy balance of continued belief in the Tapestry vision, belief in the gifts of merger and Tapestry's re-centering your financial needs to stabilize the budget. This was a hard look at the many perspectives and concerns. This meeting became a celebration because it offered a way for the community to take the immediate next steps while still keeping sight of the opportunity for growth. Tapestry is now poised to make those commitments real in a physical way.

As we end this congregational year, and our journey together comes to a close, I feel good about the many ways Tapestry has grown, strengthened, and opened. Tapestry is a compassionate, capable, and committed Unitarian Universalist community. You have your eyes on a vision for Unitarian Universalism in Orange County and a heart that puts you in the present, concerned with the health of the congregation! Soon you will have the opportunity to welcome the Reverend Tom Owen-Towle as your consulting minister. I am confident you will give him the love you give all your ministers.

I leave with gratitude for the opportunity and honor to serve this community. Thank you for your trust, support, well wishes, and most importantly your commitment to Tapestry.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mitra Rahnema