



# BRADFORD COMMUNITY CHURCH UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

5810 8TH AVENUE, KENOSHA, WI 53140 ~ [www.BradfordUU.org](http://www.BradfordUU.org) ~ [Facebook.com/BradfordUU](https://www.facebook.com/BradfordUU)

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## REVISION TASK FORCE - REPORT, JULY 17<sup>TH</sup>, 2019

### BACKGROUND

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Religious Education as it now exists at Bradford UU is not working. Association-wide, the UUA is experiencing a drop in RE attendance and raised-UUs transitioning to adult congregational members. Our experience at Bradford UU is consistent with this larger trend. Additionally, it has become difficult to find adequate Religious Education volunteers to help staff classrooms, often resulting in the same volunteers working week after week and losing connection to the upstairs worship experience.

The REvision Task Force was appointed by the Bradford UU Board of Trustees to explore different possible programming to better serve our religious seekers of all ages.

### PROCESS

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The REvision Task Force was made up of staff representatives Krystal Rose, Denise Cawley and Rev. Erik, Bradford UU members Dani and David Lockwood and Celeste Walker, and friends-of-the-church and current RE parents Ken and Sara Kerby.

The Task Force met four times between April and July and each member took on different areas of research and consultation with other UU congregations.

### LEARNINGS

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Our current RE strategy is based on the assumption that separating kids from adults on Sunday mornings is good for both the children and the adults as it allows the children to learn in a peer-based environment and frees the adult worship from having to address the needs of children. We now believe this assumption to be false.

Instead, we have found that congregations which engage the whole of the lifespan in both worship and religious education have much more successful programs with a larger diversity of ages represented within congregational life.

Furthermore, we have found that after only a brief transition time, both adults and children become well-acclimated to participating in church programming together.

### PROPOSAL

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As a result of our meetings and learnings, the REvisioning Task Force would like to make the following proposal:

- Hold two Sunday services a month that follow the "traditional" worship format with the addition of a "time for all ages" section with children attending the entire service.
- Hold two "RE" Sunday services using an abbreviated worship format which integrates a complete lesson plan with story, discussion and activity for all participants.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays / once a quarter perform an intergenerational, interactive worship with pageants/plays, etc.

## **IMPLICATIONS AND STRATEGIES**

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As with any change to programming or worship format, this transition will certainly be met with some trepidation and resistance from some Bradford UU members, both young and old. Having plans in place ahead of time will help with the ease of transition and prepare our service leaders to be more effective early on.

With children in service every week, there will be an added burden on parents and other adults to help supervise and support our families with young children.

We recommend that:

- The Worship Arts and Religious Education Teams begin meeting together, perhaps even forming a new group that supplants these two. This will be essential in coordinating the schedule of services and aligning components of RE within worship.
- Children be included in the worship ritual by taking on roles during service, such as lighting the chalice, taking the collection, distributing stones for Joys & Concerns, etc.
- Activity-centered worships be coordinated with potluck Sundays so that tables and chairs may be set up the same for both worship and after service.
- "Busy bag" activity packets be re-assembled for a larger age-range of children's interests for traditional worship Sundays.
- Discussion group space be provided for adults who do not wish to or cannot participate in the religious education activity on Religious Education Sundays.
- Include take-home resources on Sunday topics in orders of service and encourage week-long engagement in the theme.

## **CONCLUSION**

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Though any transition in programming can be a source of conflict for the congregation, we are confident that changing the way we care for our members of all ages will increase community interaction, appreciation of intergenerational similarities and differences, and engage children in UU worship and adults in lifelong religious learning.

This change will also streamline the planning and implementation process for Sundays as staff and volunteer leadership will all be working on the same program each week.

Respectfully Submitted,

The REVision Task Force, July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Approved,

Bradford Community Church Unitarian Universalist

Board of Trustees, July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019