

JOINT STATEMENT FROM THE HEALING AND RECONCILIATION TEAM

A conflict began in March of 2007 at First UU Church between Church Staff and YAO related to the creation of the group for 25 to 35-year olds. The following is a summary of key elements of the conflict:

- YAO has traditionally been open to all members ages “20ish to 40ish”
- A staff person was hired through a grant that required them to work in the 18 to 35-year old age group though the staff person worked directly with YAO until this conflict happened. In response to the conflict, the Board of Trustees reassigned the staff person to work only with the 18-35 age group.
- The new 25 to 35 age group was created under the auspices of the newly hired staff person under the supervision of the Associate Minister.
- YAO members were left out of the process and YAO membership has suffered while the 25 to 35 group has thrived.
- YAO members felt disaffected and disrespected and some members did not engage in appropriate communication with the staff and/or clergy leaving them feeling disrespected, as well.

In April of 2008, a Healing and Reconciliation Team was created composed of David McCain and Susan Berez from YAO and Rev. Dr. Arvid Straube, Rev. Kathleen Owens, and Jan Gallo to select a neutral third party and work with this third party to create a process for all parties to heal. The Healing and Reconciliation Team met with the third party, Kathryn Medina, a consultant from the Pacific Southwest District hired to mediate this conflict, on June 15th. With Kathryn, the Team members shared their perspective on the conflict and identified these common interests:

- Increase the number of young adults in the congregation
- More positive communication
- Everyone being treated with respect
- Increased opportunities to serve the diverse interests of the congregation

The group determined these action steps:

1. The consultant will meet with anyone who identifies themselves as YAO, specifically the current YAO members who are disaffected and anyone ages “20ish to 40ish” who is interested in being involved. The purpose of this meeting would be to help YAO define its future role in the church: how it will be structured, how it will interact with the 18 to 24 and 25 to 35 year age-defined groups, what its leadership should look like and how it can be a positive force for the future of this community. See meeting details below.

2. The consultant will meet a second time with YAO and staff/clergy to help with the reintegration of YAO back into the community and to aid in the reconciliation and healing process.

Meeting Details

If you are in the 20ish to 40ish age group and would like to participate in the meeting described in Action Step #1 above, you are invited to join others in your age group on July 13 from 3:00 to 5:30 for an appetizer potluck. This meeting will be at Andrea Rae's apartment. Please bring an appetizer to share with the group. To RSVP and for Andrea's address/directions to her home, please contact David McCain at drmccain@cox.net or 619-218-7554.

Respectfully Submitted,

Healing and Reconciliation Team: Rev. Dr. Arvid Straube, Rev. Kathleen Owens, Jan Gallo, Susan Berez, David McCain

(Posted to website July 3, 2008 by Ellen T. Brenner)