

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST MINISTERS ASSOCIATION

PSWD Chapter Retreat Planning Handbook/Check-List

Introduction

What follows is an attempt to gather in one place the various elements required for planning a UUMA Retreat. Much of this is well-known common sense. Perhaps having all of this in one place will facilitate retreat planning.

PROGRAM PLANNING

There are usually five elements to a retreat program:

- (1) The Enrichment Element which may include continuing education, inspiration, or a mix of the two;
- (2) The Support/Fellowship Element which provides opportunity for colleagues to gather in mutual support;
- (3) The Personal Retreat Element which provides quiet or introspective time for individual participants;
- (4) The worship element, when colleagues gather as a community in worship;
- (5) The UUMA Chapter Business Element.

1. Program Element

- Determine program content (*eg* C.E.N.T.E.R. Presenter; UUMA or UUA current topic or theme; local presenter of topic of interest; “in-house” presenter(s).
- Invite and confirm presenter(s) well in advance.
- Plan to welcome out-of-town guest presenter(s) (*eg* meet at airport as needed, bring to retreat location).
- Schedule Odyssey Presenter from list maintained by the Chapter Vice President (or Executive Committee); and call Presenter to confirm. In PSWD we usually do an Odyssey at the January retreat, though have also done so at other times.
- Determine if program segment for spouses/partners is appropriate and if so, plan this segment.

2. Support/Fellowship Element

- Provide adequate time for Check-In (large group and/or small groups)
- Invite participants to bring written brochures/leaflets of events s/he wishes to publicize or promote among colleagues.
- Hospitality Time(s)
 - Have specific individual(s) recruited/assigned to host.
 - Appoint someone to provide “aesthetics”, including serving dishes, implements, napkins, plates, cups, etc.
 - Have attractive alternative (juice, soda) as well as alcoholic beverages. Have water available.
 - Provide healthy snacks in addition to other goodies.

3. Personal Retreat Element

- Is ample time provided in program for individual retreat/quiet time? This is important at all retreats, but in particular in PSWD, at the fall retreat, which is designated as a restorative time.
- Is “come early” or “stay later” option available for personal time?
- At the discretion of the planners, recruit and identify Retreat Chaplains (one male and one female)

4. Worship Element

- Select worship leader(s) and confirm and assign time for worship experiences.
- Assign someone responsibility to have items necessary for worship such as Chalice and lighter, as well as items for a worship focus.
- Check with worship leader(s) to determine if musician is needed and available.

5. UUMA Chapter Business

- Ask Chapter Executive Committee to distribute agenda in advance.
- Have time in Retreat schedule to accommodate business agenda.

- Invite appropriate reports (eg. District Executive; Representatives of Chapter to Board/Committees; etc.) *This element may be handled by the Executive Committee of the Chapter.*

PSWD SPECIFICS:

- The **September** retreat is designed to be retreat-like in nature, allowing ample time for activities which are restful, renewing, and restorative; as well as plenty of free time. It is at this meeting that new colleagues are introduced; this is usually done Monday night as part of or following worship.
- The **January** retreat is programmatic, designed traditionally to allow for ministerial continuing education. Here again, ample free time is highly desired. This retreat is done usually with LREDA present, though their program and check in are separate (you will want to have a LREDA contact person while planning). LREDA presence at the Odyssey is at the discretion of the Odyssey speaker. You will want to confirm the Odyssey speaker well in advance (2 months or more) of the presentation; check with the VP of the Exec. for names.
- The **April** retreat is our briefest retreat – it is when officers are elected to the board, thus it is important to be in communication w/ the PSWD Exec while planning. Often, the Chapter will choose to meet with the DA Keynote speaker for a dialogue at this retreat. Extended collegial conversations have also been a significant part of this Chapter gathering.

NOTE: It is the responsibility of the April Retreat Planning Committee to invite the newly settled PSWD ministers to plan and facilitate the UUMA worship service which is held Saturday Morning for all participants of District Assembly. *It is vital to extend this invitation as early as possible, five to six months in advance.* Names of these newly settled ministers can be obtained from the District Office and from the PSWD UUMA Vice President.

Have program planning completed at least two months in advance so that brochure/publicity may be sent out at least six weeks in advance.

RETREAT LOCATION

In PSWD this is the Mary & Joseph Retreat Center in Rancho Palos Verdes, California

- Be certain location is compatible with program. (eg “break out” rooms; large meeting space for entire group; musical instruments if needed; separate worship facility if needed) Work with M&J staff as needed to this end.
- Accessibility
 - Are all meeting rooms accessible?
 - Is dining facility accessible?
 - Does lodging include some rooms which are accessible (including bathroom which meets accessibility standards)
- Food Options
 - Meal options should include vegetarian and vegan, with a protein option at every meal, including breakfast.
 - Work with M & J Retreat Center to accommodate daytimers or part-timers and costs for this service.
 - Send out map with directions as part of publicity
 - Communicate with Registrar to confirm site details.

ADVANCED REGISTRATION/PUBLICITY TO POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

- Determine retreat costs. (Retreat costs include accommodation [room and board]; program costs; hospitality refreshments). Work with Registrar and Treasurer in this regard.
- Provide cost options for day/part-timers.
- Provide information about scholarship aid for retreat.
- Publicize retreat within the Pacific Southwest District.

- Inform participants of “need to bring” items (eg linens or towels if not provided by Retreat Center)
- Prepare and mail brochure(announcement) at least six weeks in advance. Brochure should include Retreat Schedule.
- If a “tear-off and return” form is part of brochure, be certain important information (eg Directions to location) is not on back of tear-off form.
- Secure updated mailing list (include community ministers; interns; candidates, and interim ministers) from PSWD Office Administrator.
- As appropriate invite District Staff. *(This may not include check-in time. Check with Executive Committee.)*

Send out advanced publicity/registration materials at least six weeks in advance. You may wish to use email as a primary or secondary means of publicity and registration, being careful to have the most current list available.

REGISTRATION ON SITE

- Recruit individual(s) to serve as Registrar(s). Check with PSWD Vice Pres. for current Registrar.
- On Site Registrar(s) should arrive at least one hour in advance.
- Registrar(s) will need updated list of participants, including amount each has paid (or owes).
- Previous registrar(s) indicate need for the following supplies: paper, pencils; calculator.
- Registrar(s) will interface with Retreat Center Staff.