

## **Westside UU Start-Up Meeting September 5, 2014**

44 adults and 5 children in attendance. Session led by Rev. Susan Smith, UU Regional director.

Cindy Fountain introduced our new Lifespan Religious Education Director, Cameron Young. Rev. Alex Holt introduced the members of the Transition Team.

Rev. Smith announced that the purpose of this meeting is to learn “Where we have been and where we are going.” She began by asking us to recount our history.

### Timeline

Feb. 1994 - Jerry Rossing gathered those who were looking for a new church on the west side of Fort Worth. The nucleus of the seekers were from First Jefferson UU who were leaving for various reasons. The group met initially at a restaurant, and then in homes, and ultimately at Orchestra Hall where we held evening services and RE.

Dec. 1994 - Jerry Rossing and Myrtle McMahan attended a “New Congregation” workshop in Boston.

June 1995 - Jerry and Myrtle attended GA and learned that they needed RE, music, new space, rapid growth and professional leadership within two years to succeed with a new church. They were able to sign up the required 25 charter members.

Jan. 1996 - Westside moved to a strip shopping center on McCart Ave. and raised \$30,000 for renovations.

1997 - We hired Sam Schaal starting as quarter time and increasing to half time. Rev. Schaal was ordained in Sept. 1998.

1997 - We added space to the building by expanding to include an adjacent office.

2000 - Rev. Schaal was not hired full time, and he therefore left Westside. A search committee was formed to look for a new minister. We did not bring in an Interim Minister. The committee followed UUA procedures in its search, but discovered our choices were limited due to our budget restraints.

July 2001 - Rev. Lillie Henley visited our church as a ministerial candidate. During that week the President of the congregation was murdered.

Aug. 2001 - Westside called Rev. Henley as our full time minister.

Sept. 2001 - Rev. Henley was installed. We had 70 members at that time.

June 2004 - Rev. Henley resigned after complaints were raised about her ministry.

2004 - Russell Elleven, a Humanist minister and member of the congregation, offered his services to Westside as a consulting minister. Following this offer a UUA Consultant, along with small group meetings of members, discussed whether to buy a building and/or hire a minister. We decided we wanted both a building and a minister.

Mar. 2005 - Fire destroyed our building on McCart. We met once at Harris Community Room, then at Beth El Temple every Sunday. We had worship space at the Temple, but no room for RE.

2005-06 - During our time at the Temple we hired Dr. Elleven, first quarter time, then half time, as our contract minister.

2006 - We moved, as lessees, to a Disciples Church at 901 Page Ave. We shared the space with the church and a Montessori pre-school. The church moved out and we decided to buy the building.

May 2007 - We called Dr. Elleven as our full time settled minister. In Mar. 2009 Dr. Elleven was ordained and was given Final Fellowship status.

Mar. 2012 - Dr. Elleven took a 6 months Sabbatical. By this time we had a membership of 226, attendance of 150-160, were in a good financial position and had an active community with multiple programs including outreach and RE.

Sept. 2012 - Upon Dr. Elleven's return from Sabbatical we went to two services and two RE sessions every Sunday.

Aug. 2013 - Dr. Elleven announced that he would be moving to Chicago in October because his wife, Gayle had been made a job offer "they couldn't refuse." The Board appointed an Interim Minister Search Committee.

April 2014 - We hired Rev. Mark Walz as contract minister quarter time.

Aug. 2014 - We called Rev. Alex Holt as our Interim Minister.