

Senior Minister's Report to the Board of Trustees, June 2016

I am sorry I can't be with you for this meeting. I will be at the UUMA Ministry Days and General Assembly through June 26th. It has been a very full year. I thought it fitting and inspiring that our stewardship consultant Mark Ewert found us to be on solid footing. We have much to do but we are in a good place to start. I will not comment on his full report which will be forthcoming. I do agree with him that our next step as a congregation is for the board and the congregation to cast a vision for our future and engage in a congregation wide conversation on that vision and a strategic plan to get there. My vision will be a part of that process but it will take all of us to move forward.

Before offering my thanks to this year's board and want to continue my review of other areas of ministry. Last month I reported on where we are in our Social Justice, Lifespan Faith Development and Pastoral Care ministries. This month I want to highlight our Worship and Music, Leadership, Denominational Affairs and Administrative ministries.

Our Worship and Music ministry is by far and away our strongest program. Through the combined efforts of our Worship Associates and our musicians under our Minister of Music, Ed Thompson we have offered consistently well-crafted and deeply meaningful worship services and special concerts. We offered eight multi-generational services this year. While some were more successful than others we learned a great deal about what works and what does not. In response, we are forming a story tellers training program next year.

Leadership is a growing edge for us. The NLDC did an outstanding job vetting, recruiting and nominating elected leaders. They also sponsored a well-received volunteer fair which will be repeated on homecoming Sunday 9/11/16. The volunteer fair is the first step in a more intentional leadership development curriculum that the committee has been studying and hopes to implement. This is a congregation with a strong culture of lay leadership. I will continue to support that leadership as it grows and learns.

As far as I could tell there was really no denominational affairs committee or outreach this year. Given that this congregation has fostered some of the greatest leaders in our movement and 15 new ministers this strikes me as paradoxical to say the least. I did not have the time to devote to changing this culture this year but I will spend energy on it next year. Our ministerial intern Lara Fuchs who is coming in September will be a part of that push. I am also in conversation with my colleague Frances Sink on how we can be in a closer partnership with our sister congregation in Stamford.

Finally, I want to highlight our administration. Dorothy Adams and her team, along with an incredible group of volunteers have helped our congregation reach a level of operational maturity more in keeping with a congregation our size. There is more to do in this regard next year. Overall, I have spent up to a third of my time on management. This is not sustainable for me personally and takes me away from other vital parts of my ministry as a senior minister and CEO

such as program development, community outreach and denominational service. Over the summer I will be making some staffing changes which will help us improve our efficiency and free me up to do the all the work I was called to do here. I will keep the board informed.

It has been an honor to serve this congregation and an honor to work with such dedicated and hardworking leadership such as this board. Thank you for your service to this church and our religious movement. We are on our way to a new land.

Respectfully submitted, Rev. Dr. John T. Morehouse