

## Senior Ministers Report to the Board of Trustees

October 2017

### Capacity Report on revised Beyond End 1.3.2

#### 1. (1.3.2)

BEYOND: Welcome and build authentic relationships with people across all differences.

Current position: We are a congregation with wide connections to the communities around us. Largely as the result of the work of the Director of Social Justice, we have on-going relationships with Beardsley School, Mercy Learning Center, Amnesty International, KIVA, United with Kenya, ICONN, CT Against Gun Violence, the Inter-faith Council, the Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport and many others. I would describe these relationships as collegial but not deep. Our current policy of accepting any cause with a large enough group of congregants to run it, may not be in line with the End outlined above.

Capacity: We have tremendous capacity to deepen these relationships and form new ones that more adequately involve us with people different than ourselves. Our recent initiative to be in conversation with the Messiah Baptist Church in Bridgeport under the auspices of the Council of Churches is one such example of a deeper relationship. After three conversations, we have agreed to continue the relationship with Messiah. Last week two of our members along with three of their members stood before the congregation at Messiah Baptist and described their learnings from these conversations. This Sunday Oct 15<sup>th</sup>, three of Messiah Baptist's members will stand with three of our members and make the same report to our congregation. From there we plan on a shared potluck meal at Messiah in November.

We certainly have the ability to narrow our focus and deepen relationships outside our walls with organizations where we can be of help but not necessarily lead. The challenge would be to find ways by which we could welcome and engage those who are different from us within our congregation on a Sunday.

There is good work to be done here.

Respectfully Submitted, Rev. Dr. John Morehouse