

Interim Minister's Report to the Board

February 2015

As you all know, my month of unpaid leave begins after the service on Sunday February 15th. I will miss being with you for the February Board meeting, but the interim work will be well represented by the Transition Team presentation of Committee Charters. Here is a brief report for your perusal. I return to my practice of basing my report on the developmental tasks of interim ministry.

Task 1: Assisting the congregation in claiming and honoring its past and engaging and acknowledging its griefs and conflicts. As the time approaches when the new settled minister will be announced, some individuals are experiencing anxiety about yet more change. Sometimes this manifests itself as a yearning for 'the good old days' and nostalgia for a time in the past. I and others try to engage in these kinds of conversations in a non-anxious and accepting way. One strategy that I have tried to employ is bringing back some of the people from those good old days; thus my pulpit exchange with Barbara Fast last month and my plan to share the pulpit with Frank Hall in March.

Task 2: Recognizing its unique identity and its strengths, needs, and challenges. The process of creating a congregational covenant of right relations got underway as a result of my sense that this was a significant missing piece in this congregation's culture. The Transition Team will manage this process in my absence. In the late spring we will have a draft covenant ready to present to the membership.

3. Understanding the appropriate leadership roles of minister(s), church staff, and lay leaders and navigating the shifts in leadership that may accompany times of transition. The committee charter process was designed not just to produce a stack of pieces of paper, but to have each committee (and thus each group of lay leaders) reflect on the role/mandate of their group, how it fits into the overall structure of the congregation, and how the work they do helps to fulfill the mission of the congregation. Several committee chairs commented to me that their groups had really benefited from this reflection, experiencing renewed energy and commitment, recognizing ways in which they have ignored or neglected possible linkages, etc. Several also reaffirmed the need to communicate better with the congregation.

4. Making appropriate use of District, UUA, and other outside resources. It looks like we have a number of people interested in attending General Assembly. I strongly believe that every single board member should attend UUA events outside of the congregation. I want to encourage every one of you to, at the very least, attend the District annual meeting if not General Assembly. GA is a big commitment of time and resources, but the District meeting is something that you can easily drive back and forth to without spending a lot of money or time. What you learn not just from the formal programs but from talking to other UU's from other congregations is invaluable. Talk to Tom about the details of attending these events.

5. Renewing its vision, strengthening its stewardship, preparing for new growth and new professional leadership, ready to embrace the future with anticipation and zest. I have been supporting the Search Committee per their requests. I have been communicating with staff and leadership and membership about the process, offering reassurances, and reminding people of the importance of trust during this time. I will preach my last sermon before my leave as the kick-off to the annual budget drive per the request of the YRSC. I have made sure that the YRSC's requests for testimonials in the services are honored in my absence.

A couple of follow up details from last month's meeting:

- In consultation with the currently identified stakeholders. I have begun to create a draft for a Communications Committee which will be ready for your review at the March meeting as previously agreed.
- Jan discovered that the Danbury UU congregation has had very positive experiences doing a picture directory with Olan Mills/Lifetouch. I have had experience in other congregations with them as well. Jan is getting more detailed information from their local representative which she will provide to Anne once she has completed her exploration. I suggest you take a look at this link so you can get an idea of how they work:
<http://churchdirectories.lifetouch.com/how-it-works>. Advantages to using a commercial picture directory company would be:
 1. They take all the pictures on site at the church so people don't have to go to a studio. This tends to increase participation.
 2. They provide the volunteer coordinators with materials and detailed instructions which makes their job easier

3. They are experienced in working with church data bases which makes the export/coordination of our data with their pictures easier.

The major disadvantage would be saying no to a well-respected church member and working with people you don't know.

Although I will not be at the meeting Monday I am available by email until Sunday afternoon if you have any questions or concerns or would like more information about anything.

If I don't see you on Sunday I look forward to seeing you when I return on Monday March 16th.

In the Interim,

Rev. Roberta