

State of the Church

The church is doing well despite the political and moral fallout from the election. I have felt the need to focus my preaching ministry on finding community and healing for the time being and so most of my sermons will be more pastoral than prophetic in nature through the holidays. There will come a time when I will invite us to engage in a moral issues but that time is not now. For now we need to celebrate our congregation and the timeless message of hope that this season engenders.

Our pastoral care needs have been growing. Thanks to our chaplains we seem to be more responsive towards those in need including those who have not been coming because of health and mobility concerns. I am also very thankful for the pastoral ministry of Ed Thompson and Lara Fuchs. Indeed, the entire staff deserves thanks for watching out for the wellbeing of our members and friends. The chaplains have also been successfully running several “Transition groups”; facilitated support groups for those going through grief, divorce, job loss and a general “fear of the future”.

Update on New England Regional Move

We have an agreement from the Eastern Regional Group leadership to “grandfather” our current 10th and 11th graders into the youth programming for the next two years at no extra cost. All our incoming youth starting next year will be going through whatever youth programming the New England Regional Group has to offer. I will be in touch with the NER leadership to offer what help we can to promote youth offerings here in Western CT. With this agreement I feel we are ready to complete our move to the NER.

Membership Trends and Outreach

As you will see from the Executive Director’s report we have seen a drop-off in membership and attendance year over year for the last several years. This is due, in part, to the a general demographic decline in Unitarian Universalism in general and more particularly in CT. However, there are other issues with our programming that may be contributing to this which I will discuss with you directly. I am aware of what is happening and we are addressing what we can. One way, we are addressing this directly is in an increased emphasis on outreach. Our increased social justice presence is attracting new visitors. We will continue those efforts as one of the best ways to increase attendance and membership.

Respectfully submitted, Rev. Dr. John T. Morehouse