

Senior Minister's Report to the Board of Trustees

January 2017

Our holiday programming went well. Services were well attended by a broad cross section of the congregation. I am grateful to our intern minister, Lara Fuchs for her initiative and skill in bringing together a solstice service which was very well attended, and, along with Ed Thompson, a Christmas morning service attended by 60 people.

My message as we begin this New Year is all about finding hope. We are tilting towards authoritarianism and our congregation, along with so many others, must offer a safe and hopeful space in which to be healed and find strength for the work ahead. That is our short term mission right now.

We have made a few changes in our Life Span Faith Development program worth reporting. First, using a simpler curriculum for our lower graders we are hoping to make the work easier for our children and the volunteer adult teachers and assistants. Second, we are re-designing our coming of age program so that it will include both the coming of age curriculum and middle school OWL in a regular sequence. Third, we have increased our adult program significantly now offering two meditation groups, classes for parents and a church wide common read of *Waking Up White*.

Our social justice ministry is growing. We now have the required number of participants for the Beloved Conversation program in Feb and March which will help us to learn more about race, white privilege and how to talk about it. Soon we hope to partner with an African American church in Bridgeport. I am also moderating a discussion between the Norwalk Police Chief and the Black Lives Matter group on MLK Day.

I attended the three day Convocation at Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago along with Lara. This training and learning opportunity was deeply informative. While there I interviewed the next Intern Minister recommended by the Meadville Lombard Theological School for a two year assignment starting next September. She is a very strong candidate and I will be able to announce her soon.

I wish you all the very best in this New Year, whatever comes our way,

Rev. Dr. John Morehouse