

Update to the Board of Trustees  
Unitarian Church in Westport  
January, 2015

Happy New Year board members! And welcome back from your holiday festivities. I hope you all had great times with friends and family and are returning with renewed commitment and energy, or at least that any New Year's resolutions you made are still feasible.

After a few months of trying a new system of coordinating our meeting agenda via email, the Executive Committee met in person earlier this month to review our progress against the goals we had established in our summer off-site and craft the meeting agenda (and a partial agenda for next month) to ensure continued progress. We were all pleased that quite a bit of progress has been made on most of the goals we set for ourselves, and that our coming meetings will include the work needed to continue to do so.

The cadence of town halls has continued, with the most recent topic devoted to Process Governance. This was very timely, as it seems quite a few questions have come my way recently that, while not being ABOUT Governance, were opportunities to respond in a more organized way referring the various requests to the appropriate parties. The progress on committee charters and policies is encouraging and when complete will enable more widespread understanding; until then part of our job is maintaining clarity and focus on what is, and is not, board work.

Speaking of "board work", one of our goals for the year was to support the Ministerial Selection Committee in their work, and toward that end Roberta and I met with committee representation to be sure we are clear on how to best support them in maintaining a non-anxious presence and in managing expectations – we'll be talking about that more in Monday's meeting. But with the committee moving into the extremely sensitive phase of assessing candidates who have stepped forward, in an atmosphere of complete confidentiality, their going "dark" can create some anxiety as less information will be flowing at this time. In addition, given the diversity of qualities we as a congregation want in our new minister, it is inevitable that no one person could embody all of them completely, so we'll be talking about how we can help manage expectations and ensure that the candidate has a good opportunity to be heard and that our new minister gets off to the best possible start when the time comes.

Another weighty topic on our agenda is constitutional changes: I am organizing a list of the desired constitutional changes for our discussion, so we can finalize which ones we want to recommend to the congregation, and with what language. We have a full and challenging agenda for Monday, so rest up and come energized!

"the pessimist complains about the wind, the optimist expects it to change; the realist adjusts the sail"

- William A. Ward

Michelle