

## Report to the Board May 2017

Despite incredible effort on the part of the Stewardship Committee and our Visiting Stewards we are not likely to make our pledge goal of \$640,000. As Catherine will explain, we have adjusted projected expenses downward to reflect that shortfall.

As I have contended for the last year, we are still in transition from a long and well-established ministry, to a new understanding of ourselves as a "spiritual center with a civic circumference". Part of this transition includes a "right sizing" of our congregation to reflect the reality that we are now a large mid-size church. I will continue to review our ministry programs and evaluate which seem to be successful and which need to be scaled to our size. As a congregation we have become accustomed to a level of service and staff support, which, in the long run, may not be sustainable. As our ends are more fully developed I will be making adjustments in budget and staffing to reflect those ends.

That said, the energy in our congregation remains high and optimistic. I continue to focus my worship ministry on providing hope and resilience for those who come on Sunday. I leave the message of social justice to the work we are actually doing in our communities.

This past month I participated in a "curriculum Incubator" at Meadville Lombard Theological School. The Fahs Collaborative, ( <http://www.meadville.edu/the-fahs-collaborative.php> ) which launches and curates ground breaking curricula for our movement, is taking on my Doctoral thesis "Creating Theology Together" and creating a curriculum for congregations eager to move beyond affirming individual theologies to creating a more shared theology rooted in a social justice project. Much like Beloved Conversations, which a group from our church has just completed, this curriculum aims to transform churches into justice making congregations through a foundation in a shared theology. In some ways, this project is envisioned as the center piece to the Fahs family of curricula. The curriculum will be web based, complete with on-going training and support from Meadville Lombard. Field testing is set for January 2018.

Respectfully Submitted, Rev. Dr. John Morehouse