

Minister's Report to the Board - January 2018

Whew... The swirl and whirlwind that is December at a church has come and gone. This season always brings a lot of activity and excitement. And it is a given that pastoral concerns increase during the holidays. I hope that you had a good holiday season. We headed back to Kentucky to see friends and family for a week after Christmas.

The passing of the new year is a milestone for me. Everything is so new and forward leaning during those first months. I recall the shift that occurred at the church in Pittsburgh after the holiday break in my first year there. I have now been here 5 months. That is enough time to get through those introductory pieces: meeting new people (though I am still meeting new people every week), learning about the building (I just noticed something new yesterday), getting to know the staff (so excited to be working with these people), and having that first month of sermons behind me ("What is he going to say?"). In some way, some of the brand-new shininess has worn off, and I move from being "the new minister" to being simply "the minister." While the last five months have been an incredible experience, I welcome the shift. I am looking forward to the work of the second half of the year. Even though the primary goal of the year remains relational, there is now some freedom (still looking for the time..) to move ahead with some deeper work. Happy New Year!

I have been in conversation with some congregants about serving on the Pastoral Care Team. I hope to finalize the team during January and hold a training in early February. The establishment of this team will be the bedrock of our pastoral care efforts ensuring that, to the best of our ability, no one falls through the cracks.

The current intern minister Nativity Lutheran Church in Bend is Heidi Johnson. I have been in conversation with her and Chris Kramer, the pastor. Heidi has felt misplaced in the Lutheran tradition for some time now. Part of her internship is discernment. With the support of Chris and the congregation, she is going to begin a relationship with UUFCO in this new year. She has decided to leave the Lutheran Church and begin a path toward UU ministry. She will be attending services once a month and working with Ayla on some RE opportunities. Heidi has tremendous potential for UU ministry, and I am glad that UUFCO can be here to support her.

The generosity of the congregation is inspired. On December 24, our congregation raised \$4,266 for Bethlehem Inn and \$4,655 for the Ministerial Discretionary Fund.

From January 22-26 I will be attending 2018 UU Ministerial Association CENTER - Institute for Excellence in Ministry in Palm Harbor, FL. This is a conference held every three years by the UUMA. I have attended the previous two conferences, and they were extremely valuable for me in my formation. Previous years, I took workshops on preaching and ministerial authenticity. This year I am focusing on entrepreneurial ministry. My hope is that this workshop will help seed ideas and strategies for out-of-the-box thinking on how UUFCO can integrate into the Bend community.