

UUFCO January Board Report - Minister

By Rev. Antonia Won, January 12, 2016

This morning, as I left a meeting with a group of members who've been involved at expert levels with our buildings and its systems – Tom Wykes, LouSchmerber, Lew McFarland, Chris Atkin, and others – to explain my concept of the Sexton's role as part of the larger staff, one said to me, "They didn't teach you this in seminary, did they?!"

No, indeed they didn't. Most of what I'm doing at UUFCO reaches to many areas of my life experience both before and after seminary, from understanding how buildings function to having pretty good estimating skills for budget purposes; from knowing how boards work to being attuned to people's experiences of coming to church; from dealing with the public to working with a professionals; from seeing organizational needs to spotting trends; from observing local social characteristics to program planning and execution; from assessing risks to sensing when to re-evaluate a goal.

I'm grateful for the toolkit of skills and experience I have to draw on to speak to so many aspects of our organizational life. I'm grateful for the countless toolkits and skills the lay leadership has to draw on. The level of expertise and commitment Facilities Management Team has brought to grounding the ownership of the building in respect to its operation and maintenance is yet another pocket of amazing skill within this community.

I'm grateful for the capacity of the leadership to 'metabolize change,' as Rev. Nancy Bowen put it so well. It has made the challenges of the past year possible for me, if sometimes (okay, lots of times!) extremely stressful. As we approach our one-year anniversary in the New Home, I am relieved – yes, relieved – that what we are becoming is a little less of a mystery. We were warned that we are prone to conflict in times of so much change. We've had conflicts and tensions, and we've worked our way through them, usually finding new levels of agreement – so far!

I was also relieved when a local colleague said, "I'm in my third year here in Bend, and I'm only now starting to feel like I have a handle on things." That was

without visa delays. That was without a building move. That was without the sudden increase in participation. David Paulsmeyer, (Shared Ministries Committee) who spent his career studying organizational change, says the rule of thumb for change to shake out is 4 – 5 years. Interesting then, that the ‘rules’ for Developmental Ministries now require a commitment of 5 years, without the option to call.

There is still much ‘building’ to do before any of us is likely to feel we have a ‘handle’ on things. And more big decisions are speeding towards us! In the meantime, I am deeply gratified by where we are and very intrigued by the possibilities of this creative, curious, committed congregation; our third workshop on January 31 may reveal even more.

Reverently yours,
Rev. K. Antonia Won