

UUFCO September 2016 Board Report - Minister

By Rev. Antonia Won, September 6, 2016

What a different summer this was from last; the fruits of our work as a congregation clearly evident in the quality of worship services and the substantial attendances, the capable confidence of staff, and new and renewed lay leadership resources. Systems and roles of working and communicating continue to develop and become more customary. It is gratifying to see many collaboratively engaged in various projects underway, and new people accepting invitations to become involved. After two years of intense work and stress I made self-restoration my summer project, with happy success. I am pleased to be here and looking forward to this last year with you all.

As we enter this year, my aim is to help us be thoughtful and realistic about what we can expect of the congregation and one another during this year and beyond, and to support the Board in this year of transition: transition of size, governance and leadership. All of these transitions will go on beyond my tenure and it's my desire to do my best to leave you in the best possible place with them all.

Getting to the best place possible will entail a commitment by all of us to dedicate time together to speak honestly and courageously. Some of that conversation took place at our retreat day last June, with Jim Morris' facilitation. More will hopefully occur in the sessions with Rev. Cat. And it will be challenging for us around the Board table to break with our task-focused culture and habits to have important conversations that provide foundations for future years' work.

I have been reading about succession plans for churches to make sure I do what I can to facilitate the ministerial transition. The best book so far is *The Elephant in the Boardroom: Speaking the Unspoken About Pastoral Transitions*, which is both insightful and practical. The author conceives of a church as a 'living, breathing organism and experiences all of the same emotions as an individual,' and gently makes the point several times about how important it is to talk about transition issues we fear and don't want to talk about; that making them taboo rewards silence, punishes honesty, and puts systems in place that perpetuates dysfunction, and that this is a spiritual issue.

As we navigate the months ahead, may we have the courage to entertain our fears and questions. 'Transformation is not a function of information, but of exploration with trust.' May we have the strength in our relationships with the Spirit of Life and trust of one another to talk openly and in our vulnerability, and to seek grace and healing, that we may serve the congregation with integrity and wisdom.

Reverently yours,

Rev. K. Antonia Won