

Senior Minister's Report to the Board of Trustees

TUCW, September 2015

I have been on the job for just over a month and I am exhilarated and hopeful. I enjoyed the summer services and the "soft start" in August which I used to meet with groups, committees and individuals. As we gather to full strength this fall, I anticipate an increase in attendance and giving. Some of that is the normal result of having a new minister and some will come from those returning to the church after a hiatus. My preaching and message will be largely aspirational and future oriented as we work to heal some of the rift following Frank's long and fruitful ministry. Some of you have noticed that I have invited Frank to return into the life of the congregation as the Minister Emeritus. I remind all of us that Frank is one of the ministers of this church and he is entitled to the respect and responsibility of that office.

I have also come to deeply appreciate all the amazing work Roberta did with you in her interim ministry. Much of your strength as a congregation is contained in the work she did with you. The Worship Associates program and the Pastoral Care Associates program are both functioning very well and are providing me the support and wisdom I need as your new Senior Minister. The Committee on Ministry is well engaged in our work of expanding the understanding of shared ministry which is my opening message. They also recognize as do I that we need to work diligently on a Covenant of Right Relations so that we all may be accountable to each other and the congregation we share.

Of course, you have so many other strengths to draw on. The music ministry here is outstanding in every way. Working with Ed is a joy and an honor. The work you have done on moving to policy governance is actually quite remarkable, present frictions notwithstanding. As a board you understand the concept of being policy driven and you are moving towards that reality quickly. Please give yourselves credit for a job well done. Moving to PG is a halting and uneven process that takes many years.

I do want to bring your attention to several areas where I am concentrating my energy. The first is administration. While I am the CEO under PG, it is a different model than the business world. We are a congregational polity and thus, the fiduciary authority lies with the board and those designated by the board to do that work. I will guide you on larger trends and vision but I will not be the head manager of the church's business. That role falls to the CFO (the Treasurer) and the COO (the Director of Operations). The best practices of a large church rely on a professional executive administrator to run much of the day to day business of the church, leaving the senior minister free to direct the ministry of its service to congregants and the larger community. The Director of Operations reports to me and we meet for several hours each week to review operations and finances but I must rely on her to run the operations of the church along with those trustees and board committee heads whose authority and assistance she requires. I have asked Dorothy to attend board meetings in this role, shortening the communication chain from

the board to the operational head of the church. This role will have an impact on our policies moving forward.

I am also giving a great deal of attention to our small group ministry program. This ministry is vital to our ability to retain new members and deepen our community life. You will see some changes as we go forward, most notably, linking our worship to these groups around the use of common monthly spiritual themes.

In the months ahead I will turn my attention to strengthening our religious education program for all ages (we will be returning to Camp Jewell this spring for instance) and our stewardship program. Our giving is up overall, however we need a much stronger link between our giving and systematically thanking those who give. Ultimately, a Director of Development and Communication would be of the most benefit to the church size we aspire to become. David Vita and I are working on membership attraction and social justice outreach programs. Most of that work will need to wait until the New Year.

All in all, I feel honored and blessed to be your senior minister. We will go far together.

Respectively Yours, Rev. Dr. John T. Morehouse