Dear Board,

There have been moments, glimpses, the past few weeks, when I can see who we might become, together, 5 or 8 or maybe even 10 years into ministry together.

And it’s not that I want to change you, but instead that this relationship, minister and congregation, this is a journey we share. We grow – together. More experienced colleagues report that a staff and leadership often spend the first 5 years or so building a construct – establishing the relationship, working out the structures, and generally building a basis for more.

Then, often, there’s the groundwork for yet more profound ministry. For some congregations, it’s building a homeless ministry or additional campuses to widen one’s reach. For others, it’s going deeper, spiritually. For yet others, it’s working on issues of denominational or political concern, or becoming more deeply intergenerational. The possibilities are many.

I’m learning, as I think you are, how to build toward this future together.

Here’s a bit of what I’ve observed:

* Change, even good change, can be discomforting. More communication, both from myself and the board, acknowledging that, would be useful.
* It’s good to break bread together. Meaning, I am recognizing that my own brainstorming seems to somehow shift when I leave the building. The same seems true for many of you. Perhaps we find more ways and times to be present to each other outside of UUCSC.
* Relationships, even among us, will have some bumps. And that its good. I’ve had two major conversations with leaders in the past few weeks, trying to discern the root of some seeming conflict. In both cases, the discussions were challenging, but the outcome surprisingly useful. Truth opens the door for more truth, and that is always the direction of health.
* I have room to shift into a yet more collaborative model with staff. Yes, I’m chief of staff, and with that role comes certain responsibilities, but as I’ve asked Karen to take on increasingly complex tasks, as Bethany becomes a partner in the multigenerational planning (and much else), and as the Michael works with the staff to both improve what is and dream of what might be, I find myself grateful every day for working with this deeply talented team.

There is much to tackle in the world, and of course opportunities for growth within our congregation. But the signs are optimistic.

I’m endlessly grateful to be on this journey with you.

With affection, Rev. DL