

Dear Board,

Sometimes, there's a little bit of magic happening that I have no logical explanation for. A mystery, if you will...

It feels a bit like that's where we are right now. Committees are running along smoothly, making progress in essentially all areas. (Admittedly, some Committee chairs are ready to retire, and we'll get to that...). Staff knows their jobs, and are each and all doing so (in my opinion) remarkably well. To that end, Bethany did such a good job planning that her maternity leave occurred without a hitch. And Michael, well, I don't need to sing Michael's praises – you know he's incredibly talented. Karen is doing a superlative job, beginning to even anticipate the needs I and others haven't yet clearly identified. For my part, I know when the sermons are 'landing,' taking effect. And they are.

It's good too to see more children present each week, visitors and those who decide to return, and even some of our long-lost regulars attending once again.

All that change leads to more need. In this case, for connection.

New people are expressing a strong to feel integrated – and they need that quickly if they are to stay. The long-timers are starting to actively voice concerns about 'all the people they don't know,' too. There are a fair number of families in Religious Education who barely know each other let alone anyone 'upstairs' (those of us in worship each week).

We're at the stage and the size where it isn't just about whether we have enough parking spaces, but also how to grow into a new congregation, one with a lot of new faces, differing opinions, and wanting to do some things differently.

One place to begin is being more intentional about community offerings. Your staff is thinking about this, too. It's part of why RE is offering the Mystery Friend program and I'm working to launch a revised Small Group Ministry effort. It's why the choir is growing by leaps and bounds.

I know this is on your radar screen and I know too that there is no one, simple, answer. It's something to watch, as we enjoy the fruits of our labor.

In appreciation,
Rev. DL

A note from Bethany, too!

Hello Board members! I've had such a lovely few weeks celebrating the holidays and the addition to our family, little Estella Michele. It's also been wonderful to hear how things have gone well in RE during my absence, and I am so grateful at how so many have stepped up and made sure everything went smoothly. I am so appreciative of this, and it has made my time away quite peaceful. Thank you for your part in this! I'm also excited to return to work, as I will be continuing to work with the RE committee on expanding our emphasis downstairs on play-based learning and "being" not "doing." This opens up some exciting possibilities for more multi-gen collaboration. I look forward to sharing details soon!

My best,
bethany