

April 2019

Dear UUCSC Board,

As we begin to look toward the end my third year of settled ministry with you, I find questions arising:

- What shall next year look like? What will my own focus be and what is the Board's focus? Where and how will those visions mesh or differ?
- What are the sustainable, strategic, and spiritual initiatives we have begun in the past few years? Which have gained stamina and which have not? Why?
- What are we seeking, right now, in the times we find ourselves?
- Who is overworking and who is seeking engagement?
- In addition to worship, where and how are we becoming more intergenerational?

The questions go on, and this is part of what I spend my study leave contemplating and planning for each summer. But the questions aren't mine alone – they're ours, as a Board, as a faith community, and as part of larger communities.

My sense is that we're on the precipice of real growth, not just in numbers but in depth. There's room to tackle more and the trust built to do so. We might address the deep loneliness existing in so many inside and outside of these walls, might be in more substantial relationship with our elders, or might simply be more real about that knot of fear many are carrying right now.

That, I believe, is where the work calls us, and where the possibility of profound transformation exists.

Poet Mary Oliver's words ring in my ears:

*When it's over, I want to say: all my life
I was a bride married to amazement.
I was the bridegroom, taking the world into my arms.*

*When it is over, I don't want to wonder
if I have made of my life something particular, and real.
I don't want to find myself sighing and frightened,
or full of argument.*

I don't want to end up simply having visited this world.

Come, let us explore, together.

In faith and love, Rev. DL