

December 2019

Dear Board,

It is good to be back.

Probably my biggest ministry surprise of the year is our Thursday evening small group. The size alone of it – between 14 and 20 participants most weeks – tells me that it is working. But it's the depth, the conversations, the relationships being built, that assures me this is needed, and, for now, at least, this model is successful.

I also chose to take on an extra Sunday of worship in December (on the 8th), in part for the one I needed to miss, but more to assure everyone that I am back, ok, and that ministry continues. It's meant I preach 3 weeks in a row, plus Christmas Eve, and despite the pressure of this schedule, that feels appropriate this year.

I'm also beginning to reengage in the larger world. For example, I've agreed to take part in the RI Interfaith Council on Poverty's annual statehouse event on January 7th, I've been working (again) to help the RI Interfaith Power and Light re-form and reengage after a year of hiatus, and I'm working a little more closely with the RI Council of Churches as they prepare for the transition of leadership (after a number of years, Rev. Donnie Anderson is resigning, and Rev. Chontell Washington will be assuming interim leadership).

Staff is doing well, across the board. We have chosen to delay their holiday celebration until January, when the pace is a bit slower.

I could speak of other changes I see, many of them, but one other notable one is how still comparatively newer members and friends are taking on roles. Betty Bogutt has taken lead on ushering, for example. Cathleen Carr offered a homily in my absence. Daniel Peltz has helped RE to focus on some specific projects. And on and on. While we often speak of "when will the newer folks get involved," I think they've begun a leadership journey. Perhaps their contributions will look different from our own, but nonetheless they are helping to form and shape this congregation – and that is good.

There's still work, of course. The Personnel Committee has a single member, and that needs to change. We need a functioning Personnel Committee, even if they don't meet on a monthly basis.

From what I see, every other Committee is doing just spectacular work. I can't say enough. I wonder, sometimes, if you see the Committee minutes for various groups. – our commitment, breadth, and depth of contributions is pretty amazing.

With gratitude and amazement,
Rev. DL