

Update to the Board of Trustees
Unitarian Church in Westport
May, 2015

It's finally spring here in Westport, and of course spring is the season of renewal and regrowth. So how fitting that we successfully concluded the Ministerial Search process with such fabulous result and now look towards regrowth and renewal for our community with our new called minister. It was really great to see the congregation turn out in such large numbers for the events that the Search Committee planned so well, and to see all those happy faces at the Sunday sermons. I don't think I have EVER seen such a large 9:00 gathering! And of course, the single service that preceded the vote was mind boggling. Truly our numbers are impressive when we gather together, and the possibility of a new minister sure motivated us to do just that. Well-deserved thanks to the search committee for their incredible effort and their – our - great success.

As a board, this is also a time to reflect on the last two years. Interim ministry was a new experience for me, as I believe it was for most of us, and we have an opportunity – well, actually, an obligation - to report back to the UUA on our perception of the effectiveness of the process. If you haven't already done so, please take a moment to think about the work of the interim years and how our congregation has changed and evolved, and give your feedback on the process. I will accumulate our comments into one summarized statement which I will review with you all at our June meeting.

Communications was certainly not a problem for us this past month. Between all the search and stewardship activity, there really wasn't much opportunity NOT to communicate! I look forward now to formalizing the communications committee and having that support in place next year.

I also appreciate the board's efforts on outreach in support of the YRSC and the canvass. I know we are all anxiously awaiting the final (well, nearly final) numbers in the proposed budget, and will take a breath for an inflection point before determining the next steps on fundraising and canvassing.

Personally, in addition to the above, I spent some time working on the policy book to organize some thoughts around our required policies, and will be sending out that draft in advance of our meeting – I hope. It's still a bit rough, but hopefully will be enough of an outline that we can determine who will do what next steps over the summer to get us in good shape with formally documented policies going into the new church year.

In addition to preparing to welcome John, of course, we prepare ourselves to say farewell to Roberta, who has given us so much to think about and has herded us cats towards the finish line of this transition period with gentle firmness, kind goading, and has generally made us realize how little we know about governance without making us feel too bad about it. This might be her last board meeting with us, let's make it a great one!

Finally, in the “we serve it until you eat it” mode, ONCE AGAIN our Big Question discussion will be a do-over on last month’s topic, which we delayed due to an overstuffed agenda (again). So, in a repeat from my last report (which was a repeat of the one before that): I’d like to discuss the following short excerpt from the “confessions of an evangelical UU” blog on wizdUUm (which is “an inclusive, social justice-oriented online community through which we seek to model and co-create the tools to build Beloved Community” <http://www.wizduum.net/blog/confessions?page=20>)

I had first heard about Unitarian Universalism in college. In my early 20s is when friends started getting married, and for those who weren't religious yet didn't want a wedding at City Hall, a Unitarian minister was the minister of choice. You told them what you wanted said, and more importantly what you didn't want said, and the minister would happily go along with it. No questions asked. My friends and I all liked that about UU, but it didn't strike me as a religion that I would commit to. It had struck me as "fluffy." What was the point of belonging to a faith where you could believe whatever you wanted to believe?

So this month, the Big Question is: “what IS the point of belonging to a faith where you can believe whatever you want to believe”?

And for the quote of the day:

"Nobody can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending."

Maria Robinson

See you on Monday!
Michelle