

Splinters from the Board

October 2018

There was a lot happening in October, starting with the Board retreat on the 5th and 6th. This year's retreat was held at Edgewood United Church. The three main areas of discussion for the retreat were the Governance Study Group's report, the Board's vision for this year, and MSC focus group. The governance report was presented in part by Chris Clampitt, who was a member of the study group and helped draft a very thorough and informative report that outlined possible alternatives to church governance structures and practices. The Board gratefully acknowledges the work of the study group and will consider the recommendations it suggests as we work to make the governance of the church more efficient, transparent, and user-friendly for members. It was also agreed at the retreat that three areas of focus for the Board this year will be: moving beyond white superiority, growth in membership, and small group ministry. The MSC focus group was expertly administered by Annemarie Hodges.

At the Board meeting on October 24, Melany Mack and Jill Messer of the 7th Principle Group presented a proposal to offer the UUA's Green Sanctuary program to the congregation. The program has many requirements that will be rolled out in stages over the next few years with the hope of gaining Green Sanctuary accreditation from the UUA. The Board approved of the group moving forward with the program and is working toward the formation of a Green Sanctuary committee to facilitate the work necessary to roll this out to the congregation.

The Board approved a draft Ministerial Agreement that was presented by the MSC's negotiating team (Rob Mack, Bob Swanson, Daniel Devaney). The agreement will serve as a starting point in negotiations with our next settled minister.

The Finance Committee presented a proposal from the Investment Committee to loan \$100,000 from the Endowment, to be used to pay down the Dart Bank mortgage principal. In addition, they recommend re-casting the Dart Bank mortgage, which will reduce our payment and help us get our budget under control. Both items were approved by the Board. The Finance report indicates that the projected deficit for this year is currently estimated at around \$35,000. Money is available in reserve and other accounts to help cover this deficit for 2018, but it underscores the importance of reducing our mortgage payment and encouraging generous pledging for 2019 so we can replenish these important accounts.

Regarding the racial harassment incident between RE youth and as a follow-up to the mediated restorative justice circle on August 26, there was a meeting held on September 30 to track progress on tasks agreed to be undertaken by attendees. Work is still ongoing in many areas, but some things that are happening are: two adults agreed to follow up with conversations with the youth who were directly affected; a Safe Congregation Response team: Hari Kern, Leanne Harker, and Kristen Small, met with John Marsh and Teresa Putnam to compose a covenant to be signed by one youth before being allowed to attend youth programs (in addition, the youth must be accompanied by an adult while on church property and cannot participate in overnights until further notice); the Safe Congregations policy group will work on updating our current policies to include language on bullying and the use of hateful speech; it was agreed that anti-racism training will be incorporated into our Religious Education Programs; and John Marsh agreed to work with the team planning the next Yankee Springs retreat to include more structure and anti-racism training for retreat leaders. Another progress meeting is scheduled for January.