

Worship committee meeting. April 7, 2015

Present: Anne M., Jess S., Hope Y., Judith T., Don R., Jenny G., Brenda J., Carol E., Daniel J., Hugh B., Diane M.

Judith offered a medley of 4 thoughts: "For all that is yet to come, Yes!"

Unfinished Business:

Report on Commission on Appraisal: "Our Theological Diversity"

Good summary of the way things are. But what are the goals: "where there is great freedom, there is little tranquility.

By our nature we want to be settled and comfortable but it is only to the degree that we are uncomfortable and unsettled that we will experience growth.

How can we incorporate the 7 principles in our services on a regular basis. Could the principles (resonances) be the topic of 8 sentence presentations starting after Mothers Day? Worship committee launches this.

Tensin to do a retreat here? Lets follow up (Jenny, Daniel, Brenda?)

Addiction: a huge topic. Lets keep our ears and eyes open about who could do this.

Rachel Shea is terrific. Ryan and Kate Braestrup are ongoing inquiries.

Questions: does it matter that only a small number of regulars come to the service when Daniel is away? Will this be the way it is in the future? Does it matter? What can be done about it?

*brief summary of what is coming up.

*consistent presence from week to week but maybe we should sell it a little more

* redefine or tweak what constitutes spiritual practice for people. It cant be just what we get from the minister but the ritual of attending and the space. I just want to be here....it almost doesn't matter who is speaking. I want to be in this space on Sunday morning. I love voices I have never heard before. Something rich in that experience. This is not an issue to me....I feel very optimistic. I will be different and I am eager to see what it is.

How can we best assure that Sunday morning services will be compelling?

Consistency. Music. Conversation. We know what you like and we know what works and that is the direction we are going. Can't be too long or preaching. Build trust between the committee and the people who attend. It will take care of itself because Daniel will not be back so that will not be an option. Do we have a responsibility on this?

We need to be talking about it...the community we have here...the importance of stepping up with this transition....all hands on deck....a phase of change...exciting and positive. Hard to experience that just at the moment.

First service on our own: lets think about what might be possible?

Lets design something that is a way to invite that conversation. The questions. That process. It is being addressed. Are there contributions? It is all welcome.

Discussion about the last service in June. What to do? Also how are we going to transition as a team? There is a need for new leadership. Longer meetings? One person does not then end up doing too much. Interim minister is coming. So maybe it is the summer services that we need to worry about. A retreat as was done by a few years ago when Don R. took leadership of the committee.

There needs to be term limits. A form that has been abandoned. Leadership is for a limited time not feel endless. Co-leading has not worked in the past because one of the partners was not that interested. But that does not mean it could not work in the future. A thread being carried forward.

Christian Science church in town has wanted to organize an interfaith Thanksgiving service. Are we interested in participating in an interfaith service? It would be on a Friday or Saturday – not taking away from the Sunday service. Perhaps the idea is a community gathering – not about the service. The Christian Science church is very small. At this time it doesn't seem like there is a lot of interest in a Thanksgiving service but perhaps another way to come together is something to look into. Daniel will pass on there is interest in getting together, not necessarily at Thanksgiving.

Mother's Day – can we give voice to those who would have liked to be a mother and were not able. Karen is a woman who has been involved in the church previously and expressed to Daniel she is now ready to share her story. Daniel suggested our committee can have a discussion amongst ourselves via email to share our thoughts. Geraldine and the kids are also planning to do something for part of the service. The suggestion was made that there could be several people who could share their experience – giving voice to different stories related to personal experiences of motherhood in different ways. The concern was raised that sharing stories where one person is expressing their grief of not having children followed by someone sharing a story on being so happy about being a mother. Previously the suggestion was made that Karen's story be shared on a different, but close, day to Mother's Day. We need to define the tone we'd like to set for the day and be able to set the stage for various experiences. How do we welcome different voices and different experiences? This place is about people being able to share different experiences in a place that's sacred. It's about being human – not always knowing what is going to be shared.

Daniel will be here until June 28th and the July 5th service theme can be Independence – when Daniel will be gone.

Things can be simpler than we think – some of the best services have been those that are simply sharing the experiences of their lives. How do we invite people to share their experiences? Is our role to think about “what do I want to spend an hour listening to? What do I want to learn about? What are the questions I’ve been asking myself these past weeks?” Don’t guess what others want, pay attention to our minds and hearts and start there. Our committee meetings could be deep and rich in having conversation about the things we’re spiritually engaged in. Daniel has never given a reflection on something he’s not interested in. This could be a venue where we wander together and discuss our spiritual journey/questions.

How do we welcome the interim minister – you tell us about how you are, we’ll tell you who we are. Come in September prepared to share who we are – pass the microphone around and let everyone contribute/speak to this question. Fun way to think about bringing in this new person who will be joining us.

We could also grow our Opening Words in our committee meetings to share more about poems/words/stories.

When you come to a point when you’re absolutely honest with yourself it can be scary, magical – you’re telling your truth and are standing on sacred ground

It’s a spiritual connection when people share at this very deep level.

If we’re going to do something this intimate and risky we need to be able to talk about that – are we all willing to do this?

Hugh has volunteered to lead off next meeting with sharing from his own experience.