Pastor’s Report 2018

The Wollaston Congregational Church Annual Meeting takes place during the season of Epiphany: the season of revelation that follows Christmas. The symbols of Epiphany are light and water: light for the star followed by the wise men, and the water of Jesus’ and our baptisms.

As I have been your pastor for two and one half years now, it seems appropriate that we would be looking for signs of revelation. We are looking for the light to guide our church on the path that God is calling us to in this stage of our life together. As I review this past year together, I am hopeful that we are seeing such signs.

Firstly, I find signs in the new opportunities that have presented over the past few months. Here are some of those opportunities:

* I am participating in the formation of a new Interfaith group in Quincy: Quincy Interfaith Network (QIN). This group is limited to clergy members at this time, and is focused on the ways our places of worship can come together to respond rapidly to disastrous events in the community. Our connection with this group began at QPride, Quincy’s first LGBTQ Pride event in June. Interfaith clergy came together again during the response to the shooting on the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh in the fall.
* We announced our brand new partnership with All Hands In on January 6th. This organization is committed educating about and helping survivors of human trafficking and sexual exploitation. All Hands In will be using a room in our church for a sewing workshop for formerly trafficked women. It is exciting that we are growing into a partnership with an organization carries out the work of Jesus very powerfully in the community. This is exactly the direction that our churches are being encouraged to go in these times.
* A confirmation class, begins meeting this month, we have potential 3 or 4 students who hope to be confirm in the late spring.
* Our young adult group is beginning to get off the ground! This has taken some time to come together, but as the number of young adults coming to our church has increased, cell phone numbers have been exchanged and those young people are getting connected.
* I have become connected, along with Pr. Alissa Oleson, with the Gavin House, a nearby drug addiction treatment facility. Pr Alissa and I attend Gavin House twice a month to lead a “spirituality” workshop.

Over the past year the book group has delved into some challenging thematic discussions. We read and discussed “Waking Up White” by Debby Irving and “Let Your Life Speak” by Parker Palmer. We also had a discussion series on “The Cross and the Flag”, considering the relationship of our church with the American flag.

We talked about our personal feelings toward the flag, we discussed the First Amendment and how that impacts of religious lives, and we talked about the meaning of our membership of the worldwide Church. This series was well attended, but members of the group hope to have the wider congregation hear some of the subject material. This material will be presented during worship on the day of the Annual Meeting. One thing our group concluded is that the display of the flag in the sanctuary is not simply a “yes” or “no” issue. Where ever our opinions fall in terms of this issue, it is important that we center our conversation on our Christian faith.

It’s amazing to look back on what our small church has done over the past year. I encourage you to read the Stewards reports on other ministry areas. Of course, none of this would be possible without the hard work and dedication of many of our members. I am grateful for the caring work of the Deacons, the attentive work of the Stewards. I’m also grateful for everyone who works behind the scenes decorating our sanctuary for worship and special occasions, providing coffee hour, fixing up the building, reading during worship, assisting at special events.

I am particularly grateful for the work of Kate Wylie, our Administrator who volunteers her time to the church and consistently goes over and above any expectations we might have for her role. I’m also especially grateful for Marian Channon’s tireless work as volunteer Treasurer, worship leader, and pianist/organist. In addition, a special vote of thanks is owed to Moderator, Jonathan Hill, who will be stepping down this year after 5 years of service. Jonathan took on the challenging task of navigating the way through an interim process and calling of a new pastor.

As we review the open opportunities for service on our docket this year, I would ask that you think prayerfully about what you might be able to do for our church. If taking on a position seems too much, perhaps there is something you can do to help out those who are already serving. May we all think and pray creatively, anticipating the revelation of new ways forward in faith.

Deep blessings,

Rev. Liz