



Minister's Report
August 27, 2019

Opening Words: ** *A Small Porch in the Woods* by Wendell Berry

Check in: How is your spirit; what is on your heart?

Overall: Summer has been somewhat quiet in the office, with many rentals and excellent summer services keeping our building busy. We hosted a memorial service for Rev. David Johnson on 8/1, attended by about 250 people, including over 30 ministers; we'll have a Nov. service honoring his and other First Parish ministries. With the help of our new custodian and cleaning company, as well as the decluttering task force, it's a pleasure to see a cleaner, better-organized building.				
	Ministerial Observations	Ministerial Wonderings	Ministerial Flags	Ministerial Celebrations
Governance and Leadership	Bylaws committee is meeting in September to consider changes related to membership guidelines, in preparation for Fall Congregational Meeting on 11/17.	Ministerial MFC evaluation process: Can the board have their evaluation ready by mid-September?	October 8 th Shared leadership meeting re driveway and other capital projects.	Welcome new board members!
Staff	1. Ministerial Intern Jud Wolfskill joined worship retreat and will join staff retreat on 8/27. He will be introduced at the 9/15 service. 2. Derrick Banks joined the staff last month and is doing very well. A professional cleaning company is coming on Wednesdays.	Still need to clarify the role of the board personnel consultant/committee. How will this happen?	1. Staff needs clear guidance about rental policy (Karla will introduce agenda item.) 2. Staff retreat will be on Tuesday, 8/27. 3. Laci is now commuting between Arlington, MA and Cincinnati.	Work of the Space Use task force to organize our space, create new storage, and remove unwanted items is greatly appreciated by staff!

Worship, Ritual and Ceremony	Worship services this year will have a throughline about climate justice (and its intersections with race, class, gender, and other justice issues,) this year.	Volunteers will be recruited to support ongoing sanctuary beautification: altar, flowers, etc.	Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray will preach on 11/10. Board members encouraged to attend.	Worship Committee has expanded to 13 members; Worship Associates will assist with a wider variety of roles this year.
Congregational Life	<p>1. Welcoming Committee will host a “Taco Night” – our first community dinner of the year - on Friday, October 18th.</p> <p>2. Pastoral Care and Worship Committees held well-attended and successful retreats.</p>	<p>1. Hospitality: We decided not to put anything in the 2020 budget. Alisa can send out a sign-up genius; does board want to provide for first Sunday, as last year?</p> <p>2. The Pastoral Care Associates and affiliate ministers supported the Senior Minister this summer, attending to many FPB pastoral care needs.</p>	<p>1. Engagement Fair: This seems to be an outmoded model of recruitment and information sharing – how could we retool this idea?</p> <p>2. A facilities “beautification and functionality” task force, led by Karla, is considering ways to improve our spaces, especially for renters.</p>	<p>1. Harvard is poised to accept our archives (in Pierce balcony,) due to diligence of Elizabeth Cousins (and follow-up from Laura Walters.)</p> <p>2. “Waffle Church” was a great success and will lead into Friday evening “dinner church” events, beginning this Fall.</p>
Community Engagement and Social Justice	On Sunday 8/25, FPB participated in 4-minute bell-ringing (thanks to Jeff Cadow,) in memory of the first enslaved people to be brought here from the continent of Africa 400 years ago. This is the first of many 2020 events to ensure that the 400 th anniversary of the Pilgrim landing showcases the harsh legacy of colonization.	RJAC is considering the use of its funds for continuing FPB anti-racism work this year.	<p>1.FPB/IJC is working with MCAN to host a detention vigil at Suffolk Detention Center one Sunday afternoon this year.</p> <p>2. Rev. Lisa has been added to the “clergy list” for visits to Suffolk detainees.</p>	FPB will host a Spiritual Caregiver training (for detention visitors) this Fall, sponsored by the IJC and led by the Refugee Immigration Ministry.
Finance and Administration		Do we want to consider working with a UUA stewardship consultant and/or someone who can moderate good conversations about money?	Fin Comm will consider guidelines for use of minister’s discretionary fund.	

**** A SMALL PORCH IN THE WOODS**

To care for what we know requires
care for what we don't,

the world's lives
dark in the soil, dark in the dark.

Forbearance is the first care we give
to what we do not know.

We live by lives we don't intend, lives
that exceed our thoughts and needs, outlast
our designs,

staying by passing through,
surviving again and again the risky passages
from ice to warmth, dark to light.

Rightness of scale is our second care:
the willingness to think and work
within the limits of our competence

to do no permanent wrong to anything
of permanent worth to the earth's life,

known or unknown, now or ever, never
destroying by knowledge, unknowingly,
what we do not know,

so that the world
in its mystery, the known unknown world,

will live and thrive while we live.

~ Wendell Berry ~