

This April 2021 Board Report comes after the most difficult, tumultuous, faith building year I've experienced in my professional career. I have used my pastoral reports as a sermon of sorts -- what message, if I have only one to leave them with, do I want to impart at this board meeting?

But first, two Joys and a Lament:

Committees are returning to do the integral work of the church, we have plenty of reports on the logistics and challenges and successes of our current work. There are other areas of the church programming that lie dormant right now, awaiting their own Easter morning or time of transformation. It brings me joy that I have fewer responsibilities to communicate the details of those working groups, because they are communicating with you. It is my prayer that new leaders will step forward to assist other teams in coming to life in new ways -- for youth ministry in particular, but also to help start new small groups (see more below).

I want to assure the board, the wider congregation, and our upcoming search committee, that I have been 100% involved in the planning, formatting, and strategizing of the ministerial staffing profiles you will see today and Personnel, Regional Ministers, Pastoral Relations and Transition Teams have been meeting with me and Jerri, to evaluate our co-ministry work, build upon it, and branch out to find the permanent co-minister. I am equal parts excited and nervous about the process and how God will continue to shape us all and help us call a new minister to join me.

It has been a deep place of grief for me, as a pastor, to restrict gatherings of people, and particularly to restrict memorial gatherings, weddings, other moments that humans need other humans for processing. We did a lot of grieving, in our small but powerful gathering on Easter Sunday. We will come through this to the other side, Heart of Eugene. Thank you for your continued trust in my leadership in this truly new time and place for all of us.

What is coming up for us? What should we be doing now? What can I do to help?

I know in the collective mind we are thinking, **NOW IS THE TIME TO BUILD** -- and you're right - sort of. I believe we've got to **build up our minds** right now, with information and education that is NOT found in our building and in our own minds - Now is the time that we, liberal, progressive, predominately white congregation, we need to listen, learn.

Bring in teaching groups now.
For personal and corporate work.

Spiritual Formation led the way by hosting Mary Sharon Moore and helping build opportunities for personal grief work. But we need every department to be learning from others in order to help us in our next transformation.

*Trauma Informed Care

*Non Violent Communication

*White Bird Clinic
*Waste to Taste

*CORE Eugene
THERE ARE OTHERS --

*We should be asking these groups to lead us in transforming our building and asking them what would THEY do with our property? How could we help them love on our city?

*We could consider a roundtable chautauqua style program that features organizations - we could ask them to consider giving us 30 minutes to make proposals to us - an INSPIRATION FAIRE we have 3 million dollars to play with folks. We need ideas. And not our own.

*This is a relationship building exercise as well -- and we need to build upon our existing good partnerships with neighbors, organizations we love and trust, and we need them to teach us so that we might build ourselves up.

Now is the time to build up our RELATIONSHIPS -- get into a NEW small group - i know some of our prayer pods are going strong, AND you should welcome new folks in right now, help them join in the strength of your relationship.

*The Spiritual Formation Team will be launching new pod books and opportunities to join a group in May 2021.

*If you have a 10 year group going, how can you be inviting others IN right now - we are STARVING for relationships and we have groups going.

*If you need a zoom meeting for a NEW group, a new kind of listening, please contact Karen Duncan or any member of the spiritual formation team (Mary Robertson, Judith Ivy, Jeannie Hagy, Kit Frisinger, Laura Robinson-Thomas).

For our own boots on the ground moment of re-opening the church, this continues to be a difficult task to strategize around, when our building had many purposes, partners, and daily uses.

*We need members who are small business owners to assist Admin & Budget Teams as we budget, plan, and implement our re-opening strategies and our development strategies to maintain and sustain our building as we **BUILD UP for our DREAMS**.

*Thank you for your participation in the Flowering of the Cross Event on Easter Sunday; we learned a lot from this experience and are continuing to build toward another summer gathering event, as long as COVID-19 rates continue to remain low and our county remains at low risk.

Bless you, Heart of Eugene. It continues to be my great joy to serve with you.