

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Congregational leadership is messy and imperfect. But don't just take my word for it. In an essay, Laila Ibrahim, author of "Living Right" and "Yellow Crocus" says, *"In the end, we can all try our best to live out our faith as Unitarian Universalists. We forgive ourselves and forgive others as we stumble through. There is really only one choice: between imperfect community and no community. We are all called to choose to commit ourselves to building a more just, more diverse, and yet ever messy and imperfect beloved community."*

It has been a busy year. Much was accomplished. For Church Council, the year began with a visit by the Reverend Christine Robinson, one of James' ministerial mentors from Albuquerque. She spent a February day with us - for discussion, dialogue, strategic thinking, and socializing. We're grateful for her outsider perspective and input on how we "do" church in Canton. She developed an agenda that helped us set some realistic goals.

One of them was finishing a draft of our Mission Statement, and I want to thank Kathy Wyckoff and the Mission Commission for their work on this goal. I think our Mission Statement will allow us to look inward, define ourselves, and become more confident in our role in the community.

This church hosted the Reverend Jan Hutslar's ordination in May, participated in the Dairy Princess Parade complete with a marching band in June, led an outdoor service on Meacham Lake in the Adirondacks in August, worked in the UShare gardens, a Memorial Garden renovation, led community conversations, and hosted blood drives.

But, sometimes Council got bogged down in the details, and there's more work needs to be done. We want to continue examining a form of Policy Governance that allows Council to focus on the church's vision and goals rather than minutia, and to give staff and committees more freedom in making decisions.

We also want to continue a conversation about where we are as a congregation and where we're headed. Some UU churches choose an annual "Big Question," with topics like community, loving our elders, the environment, and long-range planning.

And what about fun and fellowship? I'm a great one for coming up with ideas— after-church hikes, more game nights, potlucks, holiday baking, a trip to Ottawa for Winterlude, even zip-lining in the Adirondacks. But these things don't just happen on their own, and I formally invite anyone interested in helping out to let me and Council know.

Remember the phrase, "shared ministry"? We're here to minister to and serve each other. Volunteering is a great way to put faith into action for the benefit of the church.

The work over the past year has stretched Church Council members to remain focused on what we believe is best for our congregation. We have remained in right relations with each other as we grappled with challenging issues. We have done work that is sometimes imperfect and incomplete in service of our beloved community.

I am positive that, one thing will continue into 2019: we will continue to be a community. We will continue to love each other. We will continue our love for our church. We will continue to work toward growth. We will continue to challenge each other. We will continue to show deep gratitude for each other.

I look forward to serving in 2019, and seeing what our beloved community will look like a year from now.

*Todd Moe, President,
Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton Church Council*