

Minister's Notes
May 20, 2020

Dear Board Members,

I hope this finds you all safe and well. The long-awaited arrival of warm weather has been invigorating and uplifting. There is talk of reopening the pool, hot tub and the gym here at Ridge45, and I am skeptical but who knows.

During this pandemic time, we have been having weekly Sunday Services Committee meetings (relaxed recently to every other week) as well as a practice meeting every Friday, also two board meetings, virtual office hours two days per week, Vespers every Friday evening, regular committee meetings such as Healthy Congregation, Transition Team, etc., and I have been involved in every worship service except one since we have been meeting via Zoom. Virtual office hours have provided new opportunities to deepen relationships with congregants and provide connection to those who find themselves isolated due to the pandemic. With the suggestion that our need for virtual church will go on for another year, I am convinced that we need to find a way to equip the elderly without access to our services with the essential tools. Congregational Care is doing a phenomenal job of connecting with folks, but I'd love to see others reaching out to them. I think they are for the most part living in safe and nurturing conditions, and I am grateful that thus far they are staying healthy.

We have many opportunities for people to stay connected with small groups, writing classes, exercise classes, Wednesday night supper, Sunday service, Vespers, and office hours, and the UUA is encouraging us to get even more creative. There are some ideas brewing among colleagues to find ways to do more collaboration among congregations. Midland has had some serious flooding due to a broken dam, and there will likely be a need to offer some support for them.

I am delighted that Christine Purcell is providing guidance on the selection of the Search Committee, and I'm optimistic that UUCGT's search will proceed on schedule and with great enthusiasm. My role with the Search Committee will be to offer some guidance, but mostly it will be pastoral support if needed. I can also help committee members practice by playing the role of potential candidates in mock interviews. If they like, I can attend their meetings for a few minutes at the beginning. Christine will likely assign a coach to work closely with them as they work through their long to-do list.

I have a little Zoom fatigue and am looking forward to some breathing space this summer. Jim is remodeling our bathroom and kitchen, and I plan to do some painting and serious gardening this summer.

This year's General Assembly is virtual, and the registration is reduced to \$150! I hope this will encourage you to attend. The closing worship service is supposed to be available for congregations to live-stream on June 28. If so, this will be UUCGT's worship service that Sunday. We will have break-out rooms following the service. Check out the workshop and lectures scheduled for this year and choose the ones that intrigue you. Make notes to share with each other.

In faith & love, Cathy