

August 2016 President's Message

Dear friends and members,

And so the year begins. If you were in church Sunday (and it seemed like most of us were!) I am sure you felt the same energy and enthusiasm that I did. It is so very wonderful after our long interim period to finally have Rev. Rose in our midst and in our pulpit. (Actually, it's her pulpit!) For the first time in a long while it feels like we are whole again.

After the service, I found myself reflecting on the long path we've been on. This is our fiftieth anniversary year--a milestone we will celebrate several times this church year, starting with our back-to-church picnic in September. We've come a long way from holding services in our former beloved dairy barn on 87th Street. And our journey is not done. I am very much anticipating the challenges and opportunities that this year will bring as we evolve into the community we want to become, with Rev. Rose.

This might be a good time to remind us that just because we now have a settled minister, the work of the congregation is really ours to do. Rev. Rose will advise us, guide us, inspire us, enlighten us, cheer us on, and lead us, but we are the ones who need to do much of the work. We should not expect her to solve our problems for us. We should expect her to work with us in solving those problems.

We have a lot going on this year. One of our key 50th anniversary events will be the creation of a labyrinth on our lawn. The board approved it a week ago and construction should start this fall east of Fellowship Hall. It will be a wonderful addition to our campus as well as a gift to the larger community. It will also be the first one in Lenexa. The labyrinth is the inspiration of Carla Norcott-Mahany, who is leading the group that will create it.

There is another issue that will soon be front and center this fall. We are going to have to raise around a million dollars in the next few months to replace a number of our air conditioning units atop our building and also replace much of the roof itself. We have seventeen of these HVAC units and many are close to the end of their lives. Rev. Rose alluded to this campaign Sunday. This expense is not a surprise. We knew when we bought the building that this would need to be done. You will hear more about it shortly.

I'd also like to direct your attention to a new SMUUCH Facebook page. SMUUCH Service Providers was created by several members to give members a place to connect with each other when in need of a service. In the past, members have occasionally called the church office, for example, asking if there are any plumbers or other service people in the congregation. This new page gives members—and members with services to offer—a place to connect. The page was started by four realtors in the congregation who have generously offered to donate 10 percent of their commissions when they sell a house belonging to a member. For those not on Facebook, there is a bulletin board between the sanctuary and Fellowship Hall for the same types of service-related connections.

Your church board would like to encourage members to use this Facebook page and the bulletin board. We would like to discourage members from soliciting other members through the church membership directory, as has happened several times in the recent past.

On a final note, we had lots of guests on Sunday. We will continue to have lots of guests. Please remember that we are ALL on the Welcoming Team. For the first ten minutes of coffee hour, would you please look around and talk to people who are standing by themselves or who otherwise seem unconnected. Tell them what YOU like about the church, what keeps you here. It's not out of line to ask them why they came. People often come to a church for the first time because of a personal crisis and it can help to talk about it.

Don't forget the following upcoming events--Green Guitar on Aug. 20 and Sept. 10, the 50th Anniversary Potluck Picnic on Sunday Sept. 11, and the Community Canned Food Drive Sept. 24. For the latter event, individuals can help by having a food drive in their neighborhood and/or volunteering to load the Harvesters semi-truck which will be in our parking lot all day. Details soon.

--Marjorie Rice, Board Chair