

July 2016 President's Message

Dear friends and members,

I hope summer is treating you well and that you are managing to do everything on your list. Here at church a lot is happening. Next week is our annual Hogwarts camp for children and youth. Our campus will be bursting with enthusiastic play actors. You've been warned.

Our new minister, Rev. Rose Schwab, will be here in about two weeks. She will be in the office around August 1 and her first Sunday in the pulpit will be August 14. Please welcome her when you see her. (Just not everyone on the first day!)

I'd like to bring you up to date on our Black Lives Matter sign. The sign first went up some months ago on the street side of our building and then was taken down because of City of Lenexa sign restrictions. We put it back up last week following the deaths of black men in Baton Rouge and Minneapolis at the hands of police. It was the right thing to do, even though we did not have a city permit to do it. However, we are taking it down again. The church office has gotten several calls in opposition to the sign and there have been a couple other minor incidents—a note taped to the door and a passerby speaking rudely to one of our youth who was mowing the lawn. There have been no threats of any kind, but we are aware that some people in the larger community are hostile to Black Lives Matter.

In view of the fact that we will have a large number of children and youth here next week for camp, plus the fact we are without a minister for a couple more weeks, led us to withdraw the sign for now. Please know that the board of trustees will take up the matter with Rev. Rose as soon as she is settled. She will, no doubt, also want to address the congregation about racial issues that are so much in the news. So stay tuned. Please also know that we don't like bowing to a few negative comments, but we think it was the right thing to do, for now. In addition to the sign, our flag in front of our building is at half-staff for the five police officers who died in Dallas.

Elsewhere at church, a committee is busy planning events to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of our congregation. The anniversary is May 2017, although events will start as soon as this fall. If you have ideas for ways to mark this milestone, please contact Dale or Vickie Trott.

Your Board of Trustees met July 11. It approved the creation of a Social Justice Council, chaired by Adam Wathan. The Council will serve as an umbrella group, coordinating all of our social justice activities. At the moment there are four subgroups: Anti-Oppression, Caring for Our Neighbors (hunger, etc.), Caring for Our World (environmental), and Advocacy and Witness.

Minutes of each board meeting will be posted in the Members section of our church [website](#) soon after each meeting.

We have a new board member, Jo Ella Hoye. She replaces Penny Burdge, who asked to step down. Jo Ella and her husband Brian, who live in Lenexa, have been attending about two years. They have a young son, William.

Thanks very much to everyone who contributed to our plea for funds several weeks ago. You all donated almost \$18,000. We are using half of it to keep Pepe, our custodian, employed. The rest will go into an emergency fund. I am very grateful to this community.

One final item. We will have a back-to-church picnic, but it will be in September, rather than August.

—Marjorie Rice, Board Chair