

Spring meeting of the Farmington Valley Association
November 13, 2018
The First Church in Hartland

Quorum established: 10 authorized ministers of the association and 8 churches represented, also 2 Members in Discernment, 14 lay delegates, and 1 Regional Minister

Authorized Ministers present: Marilyn Collins (licensed: East Hartland), Sandra Fischer, Susan Gibson, Gay Godfrey, George Harris, Kristen Kleiman, Denny Moon, Virginia McDaniel, Sandra Olsen, Cynthia Yee and Tamara Moreland (Regional Minister),

Welcome and Introductions by Denny Moon

After opening devotions led by Marilyn Collins and dinner, Denny called the meeting to order at 7:05pm. Denny especially welcomed those who are new to the association.

Approval of Spring Meeting minutes

Motion made to approve, seconded, unanimously approved, abstentions by those who were not present at Spring 2018 meeting.

Treasurer's Report & Budget presented by Joyce Breland, FVA Treasurer

Scholarships paid thus far in 2018 amounted to \$1,100. There remains \$8,763 in the Scholarship Fund. This will be carried over into 2019 if the funds are not used before the end of the year.

There remains \$8,167 in the General Fund. I would like to remind you that there is still \$250 budgeted for Youth Ministry in 2018 that has not yet been used. Please prayerfully consider how this can best be spent for our youth before the end of the year or for 2019. We donated \$250 from the Youth Ministry Fund to the Silver Lake Conference Center.

I am presenting the proposed budget for 2019 for approval at this fall meeting on November 13, 2018. Since the dues collected for the member churches decreased by \$631, I have used the reduced figure for the 2019 Budget. The projection for the General Fund is \$2,731. The projection for the Scholarship Fund is \$3, 857. I have used the same assumptions for the line items that were used in previous years. (Budget is remaining flat from 2018 & 2017.)

At the end of the year, I will distribute a final budget to the Committee on Ministry and adjust the proposed budget for 2019.

Motion made to approve 2019 budget, seconded. Denny opened discussion. Question was asked about surplus carry-over. Every year, we are using some of our surplus to balance our budget. Unanimously accepted.

Motion made to accept Treasurer's report, seconded, unanimously accepted.

Moderator's Report presented by Denny Moon

Committee very hard at work, interviewing settled clergy, designated/interim clergy, investing time in working with FVA's MIDs, as well as exit interviews. Most of the committee's time has gone to meeting with those people. Two of the COM members (Cindy & Steve) have been meeting with settled authorized ministers in the association.

COM has also spent quite a bit of time researching, discerning, and drafting "alternatives to authorized ministry", to be in agreement with the new UCC Manual on Manual. Denny imagined that it might be into next year before COM has established an alternative pathway to authorized ministry.

Denny named and thanked current nine COM members: Joyce Breland, Geri Bunnell, Rob Henselder, Kristen Kleiman, Zach Mabe, Ginny McDaniel, Steve Miltimore, and Cindy Yee (as well as Denny Moon).

Regional Minister's Report presented by Rev. Tamara Moreland, Northwest Central Region

Tamara referred people back to the FVA spring meeting minutes as an overview for what her position entails.

Tamara spoke about her sabbatical, her first ever. Lots of people shared about how to transition into sabbatical, and no one shared how to transition out of sabbatical. She also shared about the importance of sabbatical: being with God instead of working for God. It was a challenging transition into sabbatical; however Tamara learned to let go of the busyness and rest (as well as create a perennial garden). She also spent time researching and drafting a book about domestic violence. It's a personal issue for her, and it is part of her calling to get the word out about domestic violence. She is also doing a lot of work around racial relations. An important part of sabbatical was also being with her 16 year old daughter and being able to be open to how the Holy Spirit called them.

Tamara also spoke about the three conferences (RI, MA, & CT) coming together as one. The Conference staffs with their different cultures have been working with Rev. Barbara Lemmel (who leads Tending the Fire workshops) on this transition.

Tamara, along with Michael Ciba, staffs the Unified Fitness Review team, and they recently had a training weekend.

Tamara also serves on Franklinton Center, the President's Council at University of Hartford, and Conference of Churches.

In her region, Tamara has 16 churches that are in some process of search and call. In our association, they include Plainville, Unionville, East Hartland, and Granby, First since Ginny has announced her retirement as of the end of the year. One church (Broadview in Hartford) is closing and selling their building. Tamara will be with them as they worship their last Sunday. Six churches are talking about merger.

Avon has recently called Chris Solimene. Pelc-Faszczka has been called by Canton

Center.

Our churches need to think about innovation and creativity, and Tamara is glad to have Rev. Susan Townsley on staff to help all of us think differently.

Tamara's goal is to have more fun this year and spend more time celebrating with congregations (instead of spending all of her time with churches in conflict or who are closing). She is tired of doing reactive ministry and would like to spend more time with churches visioning and building and planning for the future.

Blue Sky Conversation

Rev. Susan Gibson introduced Rev. Susan Townsley. Susan has known Suzi for quite a while and knows that she is someone she can always turn to for good advice and to also lighten things up.

Suzi led the association in a "Blue Sky" conversation to help us to generate new and creative ideas. Rules for Blue Sky are the same as for improv "Yes, and...". You have to play and laugh. You must talk about the future (not present or past).

First Game: Pick a word from the word array on the wall. Find two other people and create a product based on at least two of the three words.

Small groups imagined a number of "products" with their words: raft tattoo society, self-care podcast, pet food that "fertilizes" with flower or vegetable seeds, glitter spray toy, Youtube channel for chefs, witticism book, cake umbrella, sleep rocker, romance candle. (If you are curious as to what these mean, please ask someone who attended the meeting and have a potential blue sky conversation with them.)

Suzi then asked each small group to join with another small group and be inspired by both products for ideas within the church.

The larger groups of 6 then shared their thoughts:

Visioning the church as a raft, as an umbrella

Cake as communion

Using podcasts or Youtube clips to share good news

Creating evening prayers to help people transition to sleep

Pet of the month as a greeter

Interactive, dialogue worship

There was a lot of conversation and laughter with the whole gathering and within small groups during both of these "games".

Suzi closed the gathering with prayer.

Adjournment

Motion made, seconded, unanimously approved