

First, we need to honor a couple of people -- to express our appreciation to Barbara Hilbourn and Ann Harlow and their helpers for all their work on today's lunch.

This is it...my last report to you as Board President...and what a two years it has been. My focus is on my experience and not on all the issues that have surfaced and been addressed. You have already read about them in my and others' Beacon articles, in sermons, Treasurer's reports, Capital Campaign information that led to Land Use and the Building Projects Management Team information sessions. RE is growing with Merrin's and devoted lay leadership. We lost Martha Helming but Personal Theology continues as do the Humanists, other interest groups, and Chalice Circles.

My highlights over the last two years: THREE ordinations!

Three ordinations .. Aya Simpson, Sue Magidson, and Marcus Liefert.
– and look who else was at GA in Louisville...

In the fall of 2013, Larry (my husband) had two conference keynote talks to do. Glasgow was first and then we took a week to travel across Europe to the second one in Bucharest, Romania. All that time, I was caring nearly \$2,000 in a money belt for our partner church in Transylvania –very nervously! After all, if we were going to be in Bucharest, we might as well drop by our partner church in Transylvania. The gifts from UUCB were greatly appreciated and were we ever rewarded with incredible hospitality!

They expressed their appreciation a CHURCH SERVICE

Rather than shaking hand, the gentlemen of their board honored me by kissing my hand!

The Palinka flowed; that is their homemade brandy and they were very generous with it and even gave me a jar of it to bring home.

As much is possible with the language differences, I talked with their board members. The women in leadership are not on their board but, as might be expected, are critical to their church.

The cows go straight home in the evening, but once there, the even the water buffalo said hello.

This is the one year anniversary of our affiliation with CCISCO --reports in Beacon and in the packet and now people from that group and others are exploring models for a framework for doing SJ work which can engage the whole congregation.

Then, later in the spring, Bill and Barbara announced their retirement.

And people began to pull together...community ministers and lay people came forward to help fill in. A task force was formed to find an interim minister.

Stephanie Ann, Larry and I went to GA in Providence, where, as part of the service of living tradition, Bill and Barbara retired and Marcus Liefert was brought into preliminary fellowship?)

Our interim, the Rev. Greg Ward arrived and was immediately introduced to Freestone at its annual picnic for people of all ages.

Rev. Greg began his conversations with church members and late in the fall, the board began meeting twice a month.

Like his style in working with congregation, some of Greg's services were different-- one even had a camel in it.

So much has happened in the last few years that when I thought about talking about who did what and where and when, I was overwhelmed. "It takes a village..." is so true. It also takes a whole congregation. We aren't done yet; we are just getting started.

I must point out a very recent event: Grace Ulp has contributed a large sum of money to the endowment fund to help sustain our building over the years. Please thank her for her generosity.

I have been proud to be part of a Board that can disagree civilly and cares...

With Greg's guidance, we are going to become the kind of church that the best ministers want to come to. But we have to do the work and it is just starting....on Feb. 22, Bob Miess, our Ministerial Settlement Representative will be presenting the service and then staying after for conversation with the congregation. He is our very experienced and very respected guide during the process of finding a new settle minister.

Unless there is a coup on the board, Deborah Schmidt will become your new board president at a brief meeting immediately after this one. Please take care of her. She has two very challenging years ahead.

In other reports, you will hear how important it is for us to increase our membership and one of the ways to do that is to make visitors and new people feel welcome by introducing yourself AND, though I sound like a broken record:

PLEASE WEAR YOUR NAMETAGS!