

Annual Report of the Minister Rev. Brian J. Kiely

There seems to be a good energy in the air these days. We have formally welcomed 10 new members in the past year and a good many newcomers seem to be returning for multiple visits. That's a good sign. The Board is functioning with purpose and vision and moving ahead on many files. Our building is being used more and more for a wide variety of activities making it the community focal point we always envisioned. Even our finances are looking pretty good.

In terms of the ministry of the church, it has been a satisfying year. Audrey Brooks continues to offer a wonderful pastoral presence. Lauren Kay has done an exceptional job, not only coordinating programs for our young people, but also voluntarily offering classes for adults, helping organize new small groups and planning senior's lunches. She does so much more than her job requires. Choreal's has offered a strong series of monthly services and an excellent cabaret fundraising night. The social justice group has offered some strong services and has helped promote our concerns in the wider community. Karen Bilida and the Communications team has done a great job of raising our profile in social media. And through it all, Janet Polkovski and a group of office and building volunteers have kept the administrative and physical side of things working smoothly.

All of this -and so much more -is part of the whole ministry of the church. Ministry is not just my job, it is something we do together, for each other and for the whole community.

I am coming to the end of my 21st year serving this congregation and look forward to a few more. You may have heard that I have been in discussion with the Board about my eventual retirement. Some have expressed concern. Let me reassure you, the discussions have been in the service of good transition planning and nothing more. There are no dates, even in my own mind. It is simply that the congregation needs to be prepared with the financial and planning resources it needs when that time comes.

As for my own specific work, well, I have led my share of Sunday services as well as some special event services for the Genocide memorial, and contributed to several interfaith prayer services. I have participated in collegial gatherings and regional and national denominational events. These are where we grow our faith, develop skills and find new ideas. I have led the monthly Religion on Tap sessions. I also developed and coordinated the Living and Dying curriculum in the Fall. I participated or helped out with a number of community events like the Annual Fellowship Dinner, subbing for Maurice at the Food Bank and lots of other little things. I regret not offering a Spring program, but events in my personal life intervened.

Of course I married Erica in December (thank you for all the good wishes). In March we moved to a new home, because, well, a new family deserves a new home where everyone starts equally. The Board graciously granted me some time to manage the move. At the very same time our autistic son Hunter moved into a brand new group home. It was a stressful event and no doubt impacted my work for a time. So I suppose it is fair to say I did not accomplish as much this year as I would have hoped. Still the church seems to be doing fine.

I wish to close by thanking Janet for her first rate work as our Administrator. It is a pleasure working with her every day. And a very special thank you to Lauren in her education role. Lauren has done exemplary work often going above and beyond. It's not too much to say that she has been one of the

real spark plugs in the church. I wish her the very best as she moves back to Louisiana. She will be sorely missed.

Respectfully Submitted

Rev. Brian J. Kiely