

Annual Report of the Minister

The obvious central news of the year for me was the announcement of my 2020 retirement. It was a big decision, one a couple of years in the making. I want to thank the Board for their good faith negotiations around timing and other details. I also want to thank so many of you for your kind wishes and expressions of regret. It's nice to know that my work had value for many of you. Throughout my career here I have been blessed to work with Boards of good and caring people. This year's has been one of the very best. I have strong and optimistic feeling for the future of UCE as you begin this transition time. This church has always known how to manage it's own affairs. Perhaps my biggest accomplishment was not interfering with that.

At the end of March, I attended a four day workshop for UU ministers contemplating retirement. It was entitled *Leaving well, Ending Strong*. It was time very well spent. One of the most important realizations I had was that, with my announcement, I have begun a kind of unofficial Interim ministry. Instead of thinking ahead with the congregational leadership, my immediate task is to try and tidy up before I go, to tie up loose ends and leave my successor few things to undo.

To that end we recently held a very productive conversation about worship with 15 people. Helping the congregation rebuild and reorganize its worship planning and production teams is a key task for this Spring and Fall. A secondary task will be to assist in strengthening our pastoral care efforts so that community is well organized to care for its members and friends and going forward. Add to that the provision of the normal day to day ministerial services and my final nine months seem to have clear direction. It is my intention to leave well and end strong. It's the best way for me to say thank you for over two decades of a career.

I want to acknowledge the work and companionship of Janet Polokovsky and Will Adair. We have forged a warm and successful working relationship as your main staff. Both of them have, in my view, gone above and beyond their basic job descriptions as we have had to adapt to a changing landscape in both of their areas of operation. They are dedicated and competent workers. We should treasure them.

Finally, thanks to my wonderful wife, Erica Slevin and our children, Hunter, Lily, Violet and Elora. They make it all worthwhile.

respectfully submitted,
Brian J. Kiely