

Summer is here and our story as a church continues. This summer our leadership will work hard as they pursue a number of important goals. The search committee and the interim team will meet regularly. We are moving closer to the time of deep discernment in calling a settled pastor. The local church profile will be honest and completed with a thorough approach to detail.

Two major projects are in the works: a sustainability study and a feasibility study. The Vermont Conference has been assisting us in these projects. Groups of leaders will prepare written reports for the congregation on the long term ability for us to sustain our membership and mission looking on the age of our congregation, history of giving, endowment and the mission of our church. Will we use the building differently? How will we be able to generate funds and maintain the building? Is it feasible to sell the building and use another location?

I am currently reading a book entitled, Arctic Dreams by Barry Lopez. I have never met a book like this. Never! It is an adventure to read this dense book focused on the creatures that have adapted to such a hard, harsh, vulnerable and majestic environment. Only a few humans have lived there; very few. Yet there is life in abundance. In natural history, the Arctic and humans are the same age. The adaptation necessary to thrive is truly beyond comparison. The migration is treacherous and inspiring for all the creatures who call the Arctic home. Our lives here in Vermont seem so petty and uninteresting at some level because of what I am learning but I know that is not completely true. There is much at stake as we evolve as a church and as a loving community.

We have challenges as a church and as followers of Christ. This should come as no surprise. What have we been tending? What does it take to be a loving community? How will we adapt to what is learned from the sustainability study and the feasibility study?

God breaks into the world and shakes things up. God's reign and will cannot be dismissed. There is justice and compliance with what brings life. Actions have their consequences. Keep learning about the life Jesus offers to us. When Jesus heals things change. We change. The woman is no longer bent over. The man is no longer called "legion" with evil controlling his behavior. The child stands and walks. The examples are numerous.

Perhaps you are interested in doing some new reading. I would suggest a book Doorways to Christian Growth by J. McMakin or Behold I Do a New Thing: Transforming Communities of Faith by C. Kirk Hadaway. I have a library full of books that can assist us in re-inventing our church and adapting to a new cultural landscape. I would welcome a congregation that studies and learns how to do and be church.

I hope your summer is full of open spaces and loving moments. May we continue to pursue our understandings of our discipleship, our humanity and our relationships of deep faith. May we act as a loving community and find a creative space for every person. I am looking forward to seeing you in church, hearing about what you are reading. You will remain in my prayers.