

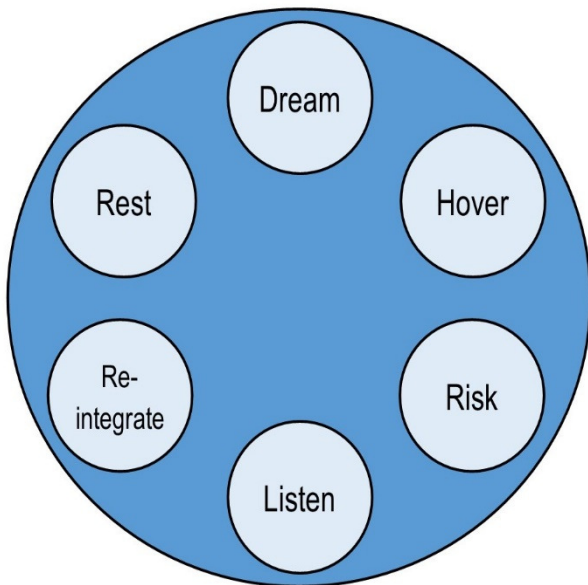
Pastor's Report 2015

Presented to the congregation for February 7, 2016 Annual Meeting

*“God breathes life into every part of the material world,
drawing all things into one vision of a new creation.
We—artists, all of us—are part of this beautiful creative-divine process.”
--Troy Bronsink, “Drawn In”*

I recently had the pleasure of attending an inspiring workshop, “Life As Art: Design Thinking and Mindfulness for Integrating Life and Ministry.” The leader, Troy Bronsink, is an artist, musician and pastor who authored the 2013 book, “*Drawn In: A Creative Process for Artists, Activists and Jesus Followers.*”

Bronsink encourages his readers to get drawn in to God’s creation by making our own reality, by being both artist and artwork (think “*Harold and the Purple Crayon*”). He proposes that we model our lives, work, art and ministry on God’s very own way of being Creator—and he links that model with the wildly popular ideas of design thinking* and mindfulness. He proposes a ‘cycle’ for living, creating, building, ministering and growing that seems apropos to the Sanctuary experiment in which we find ourselves. I offer it here so that we might be empowered and inspired to apply that creative juice in 2016!



Learning from God’s own design process, or creative way – the cycle has six waves: 1) God’s *dreams* love the future into existence; 2) God patiently *hovers* over unexplored potential; 3) God moves out and takes concrete, creative *risks* into the unknown; 4) God *listens* (with us) to the very core of creation’s response; 5) God *reintegrates* each created thing with the rest of creation placing things in harmony; and 6) God effortlessly *rests* into grace (and play) ...and the dreaming begins again!

Can you see this cycle in what we have done so far and where we are going with Sanctuary? We have a *dream* of a new way of being church in the world. We have *hovered* and wondered and imagined how we might make that a reality. We have moved out into the unknown and *risks* a few concrete, creative attempts at being Sanctuary.

Our 2016 plans are to do some very deliberate *listening* and discovering so that we can adjust in order to *reintegrate* our dreams with our neighbors’ needs and our own passions to create harmony. As well, we are adding some space and faith formation into our ministry so that we might *rest* from our work and be nourished by community and spiritual practice.

We can practice this cycle whether we are dreaming about sanctuary as a whole or dreaming about one aspect of our ministry—circles of care, faith formation, our worship life, arts and inspiration, local mission and outreach or our ministries with the Pine Ridge Reservation.

*For more about design thinking: <https://hbr.org/2015/09/design-thinking-comes-of-age>

This creative process cycle (to *dream, hover, risk, listen, reintegrate, and rest*) and the mindfulness it requires provides me really helpful encouragement – and I hope that it will do so for you as well. It is scary to be living an experiment 24/7. It is hard to be jumping off of cliffs every day and sitting still enough to be mindful in the midst of the unknown. It is stressful to always be listening and adjusting and reintegrating. Heck, it’s even challenging to be ‘living the dream’! We know this from Jesus’ life, from our individual lives and from the perspective of a faith community that really made a bold decision.

But this thing--this beautiful, crazy, wonderful dream of being Sanctuary is beyond just us now. As co-creators with God, we have already stepped out into God’s unknown future and God has made of it more than we might have made of it on our own. Everybody needs a little Sanctuary—and this new thing is already taking hold in ways we could not have dreamt of two years ago.

I pray that we, artists, all of us—might believe that we are brave enough, strong enough, faithful enough and able. I pray that as we proceed to risk even more in the coming months and years—that we might breathe through our anxiety about the practical questions of what, when, who, how much, where and breathe into our co-creative process knowing that it is in God’s hands. I pray that we might know that the experiment we call Sanctuary has this clear (but non-linear) structure that comes in waves and is grounded in God’s very own creative process. Finally, I pray that we will encourage each other to return to a restful place of grace – when we succeed and when we fail (for we surely will experiment and falter) so that we might dream and hover and risk and listen and reintegrate some more—for the church institution that had been is no more and the beautiful art that is Sanctuary UCC is our calling now. May the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer be our Guide.

In the Name of Love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Rev. Wendy Miller Olapade", followed by a horizontal line.

Rev. Wendy Miller Olapade

Please Accept the following as a portion of the pastor’s report:

The Executive Summary of the 2016 Ministry Plan (page 19)

Executive Summary of the UCC New Ministry Grant (page 21)

UCC New Ministry Grant Proposal included in this Annual Report in the Addendum Section; especially the timeline detailing our ministry accomplishments and plans