

# Moderator's Report Sanctuary

## Sanctuary's Response to the Pandemic

Frozen 2 is a favorite in our house, I do have to say it is a good movie especially during the pandemic. It focuses on doing the right thing for the whole instead of doing the right thing for the individual. In fact, Anna the sister of Elsa sings a song called "The Next Right Thing" while she carries on to do the impossible when she thinks her sister has perished. The lyrics that have stayed with me are, "So I'll walk through this night, stumbling blindly toward the light, And do the next right thing, And, with it done, what comes then? When it's clear that everything will never be the same again, Then I'll make the choice to hear that voice And Do the next right thing" Spoiler alert, doing the next right thing is what ends up saving her sister and all of Arendelle (their kingdom).

When I think about Sanctuary over the last 9 months, I am so proud because we were able to do the next right thing. We kept our service going in a meaningful and interactive way, we were able to feed our neighbors, support the movement for Black Lives in Medford, pray for our what will come next for our little church and continue to have meaningful connections and conversations with each other. At every turn we did the next right thing. Focusing on what we could and letting go what we couldn't do right now. Holding our neighbors (from a distance) and making sure they got what they needed.

## What's Next for Sanctuary

I find myself daydreaming more and more about what life will be like when the pandemic is over. Wondering what things will be forever changed and what will go back to the way it always was. As we are walking through this discernment process, I am wondering much the same thing. What aspects of the church will stay the same and what aspects of the church will look widely and forever different when we get to the other side? This is both exciting - we all get to be part of what is next - and terrifying because none of us know what Sanctuary will look like when we come out the other side. Will we decide to become an established church and lay the groundwork for what it means to be sustainable; we will try to find a community to join; will we decide to close; or will we find something we haven't even thought of yet?

The first step in the discernment process was to ground us in prayer and God's word. This was done to ensure that it will be God's work and not ours that will be done. We have spent the last two months learning a prayer practice that will continue to be used to make sure we are doing what God wants us to do. For me, this time has been very challenging, I am a doer - give me data, the past, send out surveys, read what others faith communities are doing, focus groups and we will come up with a plan. The problem with this is that if all we do is work and proceed with what we want then even though we

are doing it in the name of God we are no different than a social club or community group. To live into our mission statement and vision we need to continue to make sure we are look up more than inward or outward. Trusting in God is the only way we can make sure we are doing the next right thing.

As we move into the next stage of the discernment process, we are going to begin to ask ourselves and each other some really hard questions. We will need to take a look at the decisions made during Crossroads (the last discernment process) and think about if they fit where we are today and if they don't, we will need to think about how to reconcile and the best way forward. Here are some examples I am going to bring to the table (don't worry everyone will have a voice and a chance to listen to others):

- What about our mission statement and values are we doing well and what aspects are we not able to do or choosing not to do? How do we carry out our mission statement and values while balancing the capacity of our members?
- How do we as members and partners lift each other up and overcome differences?
- Was it a reachable goal to say we would be on our way to sustainability in 5 years when the main focus of that time was experimenting and finding out who our community was and what they needed from us?
- How do seek members that want to do the work? How do we retain them?
- What does sustainability look like when following the works of Jesus?
- If we become an established church what will that mean for our investments? What will that mean for our pastor? What will that mean for our community?
- Is there anyone out there that would like to merge? If we merged what would that mean for our mission statement and vision?

I am confident that if we trust in God, get our hands dirty with work, and listen with open hearts the other side of this street will be more wonderful than we could have ever imagined.

## In Closing

As your moderator, I will continue to work on carrying out our bylaws to the best of the LC ability, work with our staff to meet our community where they are, and to help guide us through the discernment process. If we work hard, I know that by June we will know what we need next!

Thank you,

Joanna Begin

Annual Congregational Meeting 2020

Sunday, December 06, 2020