

Time flies when you're having fun! Looking back over the past year, I feel that we have been re-imagining the future of the Unitarian Church of Lincoln. There is new energy everywhere. I enjoyed getting to know many of you as we continued building this beloved community.

As your interim minister, I will always be a temporary part of your story. This is your Church, and your participation is vital. I'm not here to tell you what to do, even if you wanted me to! But I believe that we worked very well together this year, as we listened to each other, set our priorities, and completed many projects.

I am grateful to all the committees, leaders, Transition Team, Board members, and especially your president, Judy Hart, who met with me every week, and sometimes more often, to keep the show on the road.

It has been a pleasure to work with all of you! Your wide-ranging knowledge includes a deep history of the church, a transparent approach to building consensus, and ongoing personal connections with almost every member.

The Worship Associates have been central to our goal of creating meaningful Sunday services. I've been inspired by collaboration with chairperson Kathy Disney and the many speakers and musicians as we celebrated the "Wheel of the Year." I hope that we honored some of your sacred traditions while also exploring some new ideas. Thanks to everyone who helped out on Sunday mornings! It takes a village!

I am deeply indebted to your Congregational Administrator, Jean Helms, for her excellent work in organizing and supporting the mission of this Church. I met with Jean daily, and I have a good appreciation of how important her role is in the life of this beloved community.

Jean co-operates this organization with a talented and dedicated office assistant, Wendy Hestermann, and an energetic group of volunteers known as the “Dazzlers.” At first, I wondered what this whole Dazzler thing was all about, but now I know that our shared ministry would be much less effective and robust without their support!

Some of what we accomplished this year:

- \*We met individually and in committees to listen to each other and consider next steps and best practices.

- \*We honored Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with the service “The Man, The Dream, and the Movement” in January.

- \*We studied Midwestern UU history with a 7-session seminar from the book “Missionaries, Builders & Pathfinders.”

- \*We gathered in four Transitional Town Halls throughout the year to engage the Church in Religious Education, Music, Worship, and Pastoral Care. Each town hall was well attended and provided new food for thought.

- \*Working with staff and volunteers, we hosted several memorial services for members and friends.

- \*Working with Justice In Action, an interfaith social justice consortium, we showed up to support our neighbors in Lincoln.

- \*We created a new Music Committee to work in cooperation with the Music Director.

- \*We moved the piano and chairs in the Sanctuary for additional seating and less clutter.

- \*We began after-service meetings to welcome newcomers.

You courageously made difficult decisions to reorganize the church staff and right-size the budget, to prepare for stability and future growth. We hired three new staff members, Stephanie Herrick as Membership Coordinator, Abby Lemburg-McDowell as Youth Ministry Coordinator, and Julie Enersen as Music Director. It feels like a great team to coach!

I look forward to working with you next year on a new set of goals. UCL is truly a place committed to becoming "***A loving community uniting reason with spiritual exploration to transform ourselves and our world.***" Let's keep up the good work! And the people say: AMEN!

Peace to you,

Rev. A.J. Galazen