

Report from the Senior Minister

February 16, 2009

“The Church of the Larger Fellowship is in great shape in every way.” That, essentially, is what I reported to our Board of Directors at its last full meeting in October. “But,” I cautioned, “we worry about the future of the economy.”

As it turns out, I wasn’t just talking through my hat. By now, I don’t think there’s a parish minister alive who isn’t deeply concerned, nor a board. Though the CLF kept ahead of budget until the end of the last quarter of 2008—indeed we accepted more contributions in 2008 than in 2007, we are now taking serious steps to maintain our financial equilibrium.

Hopefully, our membership won’t notice changes in program, services, quality, or depth. However, of the seven desks in our office, with the loss of our membership coordinator and intern, two now sit empty. The work has landed on the rest of our desks, which will result in a less personal touch, a slower response time, and greater stress for the remaining staff.

In these tough times more than ever, our instantaneously accessible spiritual sustenance, our outreach, our online communities and classes, our podcasts, our prison ministry, our ministry to young adults, our resources for children, *matter*. People want depth, and they want it in print, through their ear buds, on their computers, and in online community. And they want quality—better than Googling for a sermon, better than the odd podcast stumbled upon through an iTunes recommendation, better than whatever you can find at the children’s library when what you really want is a UU kids’ version of congregational polity. They want access to a Unitarian Universalism that helps cope, deepen, give, and find something to smile about. And that’s exactly what we try to do.

And by “we” I mean all of us. You. So much of what board members do is invisible, even to the rest of the board. But as I run down the list, I see that every single board member works. The tasks aren’t flashy, but they’re crucial. Even today, when I shutter to check the stock market, I feel the firm foundations of the Church of the Larger Fellowship. For that, we need to thank one another. And let me be the first.

Jane Rzepka