

Discussion with Reverend Kent Siladi Conference Minister, Connecticut Conference

On Sunday, April 17, 2016, our Conference Minister visited Roxbury and preached during the service that day. Afterwards, he asked, as he does with other churches, to meet with the Deacons and others to reflect on our church in light of 3 questions:

1. What is the most exciting thing happening right now in the life of our church?
2. As you think about the next three years, what are the greatest challenges you foresee?
3. What does your church need to learn?

Our Excitement:

We enjoy one another's company.

We enjoy interacting with the community.

We share with no strings attached such as the South Dakota Mission Trip.

We would like to begin to find other ways to balance our budget beside fund-raisers.

We would like to raise money for causes instead of the operating budget.

We would like to repeat the "good energy" of the Beef Barbecue, an event that almost didn't happen due to cost, and for which we were able in turn to pass the proceeds on.

We have a mission that grew out of one person's attendance at a Homeless Vigil in New Milford.

We have our Music program and our annual Art Show.

We celebrate our openness to try new things and find new ways to "be the Church".

We are called on to host funerals and memorial services of many people who don't necessarily belong to our church, who allow us to be with them at that time that are carried out with dignity and grace and our love for them continues afterward.

Our Challenges:

To present ourselves to the community in ways that open possibility of talking about changes in the worship service.

To utilize outside space effectively, such as Blessing of the Animals.

To learn by sharing with other congregations. Litchfield South Association is one of the liveliest.

To learn to "make new mistakes" and embrace experimentation.

To become "innovators"

To learn to tolerate failure by staying centered in a vision of who we want to be, to form our vision around empowerment.

To appreciate that our generation's children have a "high meter for authenticity" in their bones, that their focus is on practicality rather than scripture. To realize once they are confirmed and we don't see them again.

To find ways to bring ourselves out into the community, such as the way Silver Lake is taking Vacation Bible School out to places that are under-served. Community Office Hours could include people other than the Pastor.

What do we need to learn?

To be storytellers, to tell people about what we do here. Role play, have fun!

To form new partnerships with local community organizations. We could go to them as a team and ask them, "If our church could do one thing for you, what would that be?" We need to open up conversations, to be curious.

To counter the idea that we are an institution that is out-moded.

To think about collective power. There are many things that other community organizations do that we could partner with, such as the Lions/Rotary, the Mental Health Training coming up with the town and the Historical Outreach Groups that are getting together in the fall.

To think about cultivating bequests/legacy gifts. We need to emphasize how these gifts make the world a better place. Planned giving has to be part of our congregational health.

To consider a monthly Stewardship Moment. It could be a time to talk about one of the gifts to the Endowment Fund.

To directly connect Mission/Ministry to resources. Example: the recent Simply Smiles fundraiser in which they raised \$140,000 in four hours for homes.

Everyone has a ministry. Ministry means reaching out with the love of God. We need to take our ministry out into the community. To see ourselves as Global Mission Partners.

We need to be an invitational church, rather than a welcoming church. (Active instead of passive). We can do this by using "my church" in conversation, by claiming it.