

March 2023 Minister's Board Report

Dear Board members,

This is what I call the “home stretch” in the church year. We have approximately two and a half months to finish up the work for this year. Currently, we have fully met a few of our annual Board goals and have done some work on most of the others. We’ve also had some successes in other areas of congregational life: the “Let’s Get Social” kick-off was well attended and promises to offer small group social engagement for the next several months. Our small group ministry programs are doing well with the addition of our new formats (community circles, wisdom circles, men’s group, etc.) this year. Our RE leaders have been working very hard to support OWL, Coming of Age, and the search for the new DRE. The Social Action year-long focus on reproductive justice has been very successful so far, with more to come. And our newly revitalized Engagement Committee is rolling out pronoun stickers for our nametags soon, helping us to be more inclusive.

We have now reached the time in the year where the Stewardship Drive figures heavily into our focus. The plan is to have the stewardship service on Sunday, April 23, with the Fellowship Dinner on the following Saturday, April 29. As I mentioned last month, I think the Board will need to be a primary driver of making sure there is a robust stewardship campaign—for at least four or five services, there should be stewardship testimonies as well as videos and emails going out throughout the week. This will be the work of the stewardship team, but they will need the Board’s help in assuring that they feel supported and directed in having a robust campaign.

Finally, my main suggestion to each of the liaisons is to continue to note and share where committees are struggling or need more help. Many of our committees are in much better shape than they were months ago, but the process of re-building is a slow one, and there is still more work (and volunteer recruitment) to be done in several areas.

I appreciate each and every one of you, and I am so grateful for your contributions this past year. I will admit that I do understand why ministers are supposed to take an extended sabbatical after a few years; I definitely feel some of the spiritual and emotional fatigue that comes with delaying that. At the same time, I have felt honored to be with you in the thick of this work as we try to not just recover from the pandemic, but move into an entirely new chapter in congregation life, one that fits the needs and context of the world we currently live in. As church life becomes more ignored or misunderstood in the lives of so many people, I realize even more how important it is as an option. We’re doing good work, folks—even if pieces of it feel overwhelming sometimes. Please stick with it; you have made a difference to people in their process of healing this past year!

In gratitude,

Rev. Dr. Jason Cook