Prune when the knife is sharp

Dormant season is the ideal time for pruning in the orchard, but many growers still use the old saying “Prune when the knife is sharp” As a grower of fruit trees and bushes, Rev. Denis’ and Barbara Nowicki’s pruning metaphor resonated with me this week. Sometimes less is more. We want space within our structures for flow to happen, without too much friction. We want to clear out that which we no longer need, and give an opportunity for our roots to support new growth.

The Committee on Ministry’s work has been illuminating and inspiring. We are digging deeper now, with volunteers, in a process of congregational self-examination. Thank you to all who participated.

I want to bring forward an interesting topic which came up in a Board meeting at a busy time, and which I don’t want to miss.

The auction planning brought up the question of alcohol. This kind of event often includes alcohol in some way, and our condo property is neighbors with Whaler’s Brewery so I thought perhaps we should offer beer and wine. I don’t personally like alcohol events as much as I like alcohol-free events but I thought to include it for those who do. When this idea came before the board, after some discussion, we discovered that all the board members happen to prefer alcohol-free events, an alcohol-free auction felt both more ethical and more simple and we decided to skip it. We had fun without it and the mocktails were excellent.

Our policies and rules allow for events where alcohol is served, but we haven’t had any congregation-sponsored alcohol events since we bought the building more than fifteen years ago. The unanimity on the board on this topic surprised me a bit, and made me wonder what the rest of the congregation thinks. It might be interesting to learn more about the different ideas and feelings we have around this topic.

Good questions on other topics we have been asking:

- Where can I see a year-by-year comparison of the last few years’ budgets and accounts?
- Do we need to change our fundraising structure?
- Do we need to change our committee structure?
- How can we communicate more effectively within our congregation?
- How can we let our neighbors in the surrounding community know that we are here and what we offer?
- What can we do to make ourselves more visible from the road?
- How can we connect with other UU Congregations and with friendly congregations of other denominations?
- How can we slow down and simplify?

We are thinking about these and other questions with UUCSC leadership. We are finding some of the easier answers more quickly. Some questions we may answer over and over again. We stay curious and keep discovering. All are welcome at our monthly Board meetings, every second Thursday in the Oneto room at 10AM. If you want to propose a topic for the board to address it's good to have this by the second Sunday of the month.

What a blessing to have this good work to do in these confusing times! May we find space within our structures for flow to happen, without too much friction.
Amber Collins