Rev's Reflections

Re-learning

Some lessons you need to learn more than once.

I lived in California for 18 years, and in my experience nothing was cancelled due to conditions outdoors. Neither torrential rains, landslides nor wildfire ash coming down like snow caused cancellations. Eventually I forgot about snow days.

Until I moved to Ohio 12 years ago.

During my first winter there, we planned a special service for the middle of winter, something with dancing, a "cast of thousands," and special gifts, followed by a meal. Something that would get us all out of our winter doldrums. The night before the big Sunday, it started snowing and forecasters said we'd have over a foot of snow and windchill temps approaching 50-below. After much hand gnashing we cancelled the service, not wanting anyone to risk their safety or their lives for a production that counted on dozens of people being present.

The lesson was simple: during the winter, don't plan a big event that requires a big turnout. That's why I've mostly led services myself during January and February. I figure, this is my job. I'll be there, without expecting volunteers to venture out if they don't want to.

Sadly, I forgot the lesson. Lee, Ami and I planned a big service for Sunday. We would do everything, including cook huge amounts of chilli, cornbread and brownies, and expect nothing from you all but your presence as we celebrate YOU and all the ways you volunteer your time and talents. Then came the snow and the threat of deathly cold, and we felt like we had to cancel. We couldn't even just switch to Zoom-only because the service we had planned was too embodied, too dependent on physical presence.

We should have had a back up plan. No. Really? We should have planned this for the spring.

So here's the new plan: we will have this service in the spring. Meanwhile, we took all that food we made and froze it, to serve to you THIS Sunday, 2/15, after the service led by the Committee on Ministry. It will be a continuation of the evolving conversation we've been having about the biggest issues we face, and our hopes for the future.

The service will be long (two hours) and worthwhile, as we do the work of sharing from the heart and listening deeply. This is about allowing ourselves the time and space to know each other better, re-learning together what this project of faith is about, without worrying about checking off items on an action list.

Please join us. Hopefully, the weather will cooperate.

In Peace
Rev. Denis