The Deluge

On Monday, just before midnight, Joe and I returned from a friend's funeral in Cleveland. We were knackered, because to avoid the viral transmissions of air travel, I insisted on driving. On Tuesday morning, I had HUNDREDS of emails. Easily half of those messages included verbiage in the subject line along the lines of "urgent," and "please read and forward," and they usually included links to news articles, blogs, videos and other media responding to the systemic dismantling of our democracy by kleptocrats.

If I were to consume all the media, and respond to every email, I would not have time to tend to the basic tasks of ministry, let alone care for my own basic needs like sleeping and grieving a friend. And yet, it is all incredibly urgent. I want to be active in living out my UU practice of upholding justice, by reading everything I can AND showing up and even taking risks when necessary.

We all are feeling it. Taking in all the information feels like drinking from a firehose. It's hard for any of us to know how to prioritize in a way that is sustainable and kind.

I'm grateful that the South County Social Justice Coalition exists. Members of our congregation helped form the organization that literally thinks globally and acts locally. I want to encourage you to subscribe to their Friday email newsletter, which is a concise listing of everything happening locally. Click to SUBSCRIBE. Etta Zasloff is co-editor, and Johnnie Rodriguez joins her on the Leadership Team.

Of course we will keep sharing information in our newsletter and other announcements about the events we are producing or participating in here in our congregation, just as we always have.

If we are to be effective stewards of democracy, we must support the work of other allies, and not waste our time re-creating it. So if you know of anything going on, like protests, boycotts, rallies, or calls for allies in dangerous situations, please let the Coalition — or Etta — know.

Meanwhile, please know that if you haven't received a direct response to a plea for action, it's not an indication of malaise or disinterest. It's likely that the information you are sending has already arrived from different points of origin.

Writing this makes me sound like a conspiracy theorist, but Steve Bannon has talked for years about "flooding the zone," putting out so much information and creating such overwhelming chaos that it's impossible to sort through it fast enough to respond or resist meaningfully. Let's not help the kleptocrats by overwhelming each other. Let's help one another prioritize so we can be successful.

In Peace,
Rev Denis