

ANNUAL REPORT – Associate Conference Minister – Rev. Kelly Gallagher

Reflecting on the past year is always an interesting endeavor. I simultaneously feel amazed at what has been done and disappointed at all that could have been done. Judicatory work – indeed all church work – is a physical manifestation of the truth that there just aren't enough hours in the day. And yet, as God ordained the day and the night, who am I to say there is not enough? And as I look back on the year, it is clear that the Minnesota Conference has enough of all things in God's abundance!

We have enough faith: As I travel through our churches I continue to be amazed at the deep faith of our members and clergy. Even in these trying times, the faith that God has work for our courageous church is palpable from the pews and the pulpit. From our smallest rural churches to our tall urban steeples, I see faith manifested Sunday after Sunday and week after week, in worship services, community events, organizing and outreach both to the community and to one another.

We have enough hope: Through my work with the Committee on Ministry I see hope manifested as these dedicated Conference members serve our clergy, Members in Discernment and churches. As this committee and its subcommittees navigate the Manual on Ministry, Clergy Standing requirements, transfers in and out, as well as all the steps of walking the journey with those discerning a call – they live into the hope that the church is alive and well, and that God is still speaking to each and every one of us. And no greater hope exists than the work of our candidates in discernment as they take the steps toward discernment – theirs and the Conference's – to commit to a life of service to God's church through the United Church of Christ.

We have enough love: I see love drive all of us in this work. In a world when there is so much else to be doing on a Sunday morning or Wednesday evening, it is love of God's community that brings people to the table. And drives your staff – my colleagues and myself – as we work to bring resources and support to all of you. Even in the midst of conflict I am always struck – and try to remember – that when there is conflict in a church it is because of the love the people have for their church and community.

We have enough courage for such a time as this. I know this is a bit of an unusual Annual Report, but it is the story of my journey this year. As we sit in the midst of Conference transition, as we approach a difficult election cycle, as we live in a world divided and at war, I have wondered if we have what we need to not only get through it, but to thrive and help to transform the world. As I reflect on the occasion of this Annual Report – it is my deep, abiding truth that we, the Minnesota Conference UCC, have enough to be God's courageous church alive with Christ's transforming love.