

Dear Members, Partners and Friends,

Greetings and prayers to you and yours from the Leadership Circle!

Over the past year, the Leadership Circle has prayed, discussed, sought guidance, and developed an understanding that **Sanctuary is due to take a deep dive into discernment** about *God's vision, purpose and future for our congregation*. Your feedback in the listening meeting in January further fleshed out a desire to take a **look back at where we have been**, and **check in about where we are**, so that we can **listen for God's plan for Sanctuary's ministry, mission, and staffing in the future**.

Congregational Discernment is in our UCC and Christian DNA. Discernment is neither decision making, a focus on 'the problem', designed to maintain order, nor run by majority rule. Rather it is a process grounded in our core values and guiding principles; deep questions and deep listening - to ourselves and the Holy Spirit; exploring our successes, options, and prayer; and the belief that God has a plan and a purpose for us that will be revealed through the community.

The Leadership Circle is writing to **announce the need for a multi-step, deep discernment process to be planned and carried out by a Discernment Planning Team**. Our goal is to have the team formed promptly in order to begin this Congregational Discernment process by March 15 and complete it by early June. This process will serve as our Annual Congregational Visioning Meeting. The process will prepare us for our Annual Congregational Business Meeting to take place in mid to late June. *It will require the entire congregation to invest time and energy to walk through this journey together. We ask for your support.*

This months-long journey **requires a team of folk to research, explore, design, and implement a chosen Discernment process**. The LC recommends that this team include 1-2 members of the Leadership Circle, our pastor, and 3-4 others from the congregation. **Are you being called to help plan and lead this discernment process?**

In considering your willingness and capacity to **join the Discernment Planning Team**, the commitments are as follows:

- one week-end day-long retreat (6-8 hours) in the coming weeks;
- Weekly/Biweekly meetings from February 20 - March 15;
- 2-3 hours of readings, responding, researching work between meetings;
- Be willing to lead us through the Discernment Process from March-June.

We hope to recruit to the planning team folks that represent a balance of gifts, graces, and Sanctuary experiences to select the best team possible to guide us through this very important time.

To let us know of your desire to participate in this unique opportunity, please reply to this mail, reach out to Wendy@SanctuaryUCC.org, or 617-592-5852 by **February 19th**.

Thank you,

Leadership Circle