

Lexi Boudreaux's Comments

First Church in Cambridge Congregational Forum

June 13, 2021

I've found that the more I become familiar with work in ministry settings the more I realize that there are multiple vantage points you feel called to consider when discerning next steps, that your heart feels pulled to prioritize the needs of the community you serve as well as your own sense of call. As I've approached my own process of discernment I see those vantage points being: 1) where the church and our community is being called next and what our collective needs are, 2) where I feel I am being called next in my own ministry and life, and 3) where the Holy Spirit is calling us all to listen to the wisdom available to us.

At this juncture, putting myself in the position of looking out for FCC and the church's vantagepoint, consistency and stability of staffing is important for us as a community as we re-enter being in person, attempt to juggle a hybrid model, and start to process the trauma of being apart. In order to keep to our staffing plan, we will also be working to be ready to welcome another senior level minister of color, as well as sustaining our current programs and ministry. We will also need to build on our stewardship progress that this staffing plan requires. This needs to be intentional work and requires us to have time to look at our systems in place, both cultural and financial, so that they are transparent and are systems that will train FCC's culture to receive a two senior level minister model in a way that is equitable and enhances our life together. Additionally we are ready for this stage in the staffing model the congregation put forward and making this move would advance us further down the path that the model lays out to reach our goals sooner, in the right way with adequate support. Considering the work that we've been able to do together the past couple of years collectively, it excites me to think about where FCC could be in another couple of years. It would be very meaningful for me to be a part of and contribute to that process as someone who has gotten to know this community deeply for the past 3 years.

From my own vantagepoint, I am at a point in my discernment towards ordination in the UCC where I am looking for my first official call. A 2 year designated term call to First Church as Transitional Minister would allow me to be ordained to the work that I love and to move forward in my professional life and vocation.

In case it's been a while since I've talked with you about my experience of discernment, I've been discerning a call to ministry on and off since the early days of my life. I remember as a middle schooler sitting in church watching our minister, who was a woman, preside over communion and I dared to listen to a whispered thought, "I wonder if that could be me one day, helping people experience the grace of God for just a moment, just like this"- hoping that it would be. I put away that thought for a while and years later, I found myself at Harvard Divinity school thinking about exploring hospital chaplaincy as a vocation until I arrived at First Church in Cambridge and my experience with you all and the nudging of the Holy Spirit disrupted my best laid plans --as it usually goes in life. I couldn't ignore that I was falling in love with the work of parish ministry, with the messiness and creativity of the local church, with how cultivating community in service of the gospel makes my heart sing. I wasn't able to fully reclaim that call that resurfaced from childhood and then in middle school and then again when I was working as an accountant until I found myself at First Church and clarified what is important to me and what makes me, me. I have so much gratitude for you all for giving me that gift in my discernment process no matter how we collectively choose to move forward in our ministries both separately and together. My sense of call at this time is to serve the local church. In particular, the possibility of serving this church is exciting to me in this next phase as we again create something new together that clears a path for the love and justice of Jesus to be real in this world.

I'm looking forward to us all listening to the Holy Spirit together and continuing the conversation as you all discern where God is taking you next.