

According to Mark . . . October 2018

October means that summer is officially over. But in the southern hemisphere, spring is arriving in full force. I guess that's what October signifies, for me, a month of contrasts and knowing that it can be whatever we make of it - depending on our perspective. Our ministries last year took a bit of a hiatus beginning in October and my car accident(s). But it also gave us needed time to rest and consolidate our identity as a church, building its identity as one which builds bridges to persons who visited us, organizations that we encountered, and strengthening our ties with our neighboring churches. It was a time of rest. But a time to dream. Of what our next steps would be when our church year began again. And this year we will expand our partnerships to grow even closer to existing partners while welcoming new ones.

We are in the midst of a three-year preaching and project series in the UCC called "Three Great Loves", and this year's focus is How the Church Loves Creation. We'll study how Christians respond to things happening around us and in the environment. We'll have a conversation and study series with our church and community partners every Tuesday night at the library to figure out how we can begin a sustained ministry around climate change. We'll imagine how the community represents "Creation Groans" with a poster contest and exhibition on October 21. And we will hear from Margaret Bullitt-Jonas, the UCC's "Missioner for Creation Care" (in other words, our conference minister for sustainability and environmental action) on what other churches are doing and how our efforts right here in Townsend matter in the worldwide effort to preserve the earth.

It's called the butterfly effect. What one small insect's wings do in one part of the world can create a hurricane half a world away. And what we start to study, and do, and evangelize, and encourage in our town can make a real difference. So while we have other community ministry events going on - Greg's Run on October 6, Blessing of the Animals on October 7 - I'd like to encourage each of you to attend to our preaching series Sept 30-Oct 28 and our ecumenical study of Laudito Si. It's too important a topic to ignore, and I know we have questions. Which as we know, only deepens our curious minds and propels us to new understandings - of ourselves, each other, and of God's Creation.

Blessings on the journey this month,

Pastor Mark