Dear Members and Friends of the Unitarian Fellowship of Lawrence,

Please know first that, since leaving your presence several weeks ago, you have been in my heart and mind every day. I am in the process of writing a report, which you will have within a few weeks.

Today, your Mission and Vision Task Force is providing information and preliminary conclusions regarding the work they have been doing over the course of the 2014-15 year. Many of you have participated in the Town Hall meetings, World Café and other events sponsored by the MVTF. This is essential, because your Mission and Vision statements represent who you are, and are the foundation of all that you do as a community.

In his book, “Governance and Ministry”, UU minister and Alban Institute consultant, Dan Hotchkiss emphasized that the mission of the congregation is the central focus and reason for being. The Board, Minister and members all serve the congregation’s mission. He wrote, “Each member has a duty to make sure the congregation serves its mission” (p.85).

Over the course of their work, the members of your MVTF recognized that there were significant challenges to the creation of a shared vision and mission that would truly represent the whole UFL community. Much as they wished to complete their work, they were wise to slow the process of discernment, to step back and look more deeply for common threads and shared intentions. In doing so, they are being the best possible leaders! They are essentially holding the feet of the congregation to the fire of truth. They are asking that you dive wholeheartedly into your personal and shared values, to find your way to a deep and abiding peace. Such a peace requires the surrender of power and control, winning and losing, right and wrong. Such a peace is an expression of respect and acceptance of one another. Such a peace creates trust and the ability to hold one another accountable for living into the mission and vision created together.

You are a beautiful community with a long history of conflict - and cooperation. Your leaders are serving you well by asking hard questions and allowing discomfort to emerge; and the resulting chaos to find its equilibrium.

With care and trust in your process,

Patricia