



February 7, 2018

GOD SPEAKS FROM THE HEART

Over the next four Sundays, I will give a sermon series titled *"God Speaks from the Heart."* I have been inspired by the writing of Jonathan Edwards, a prominent minister of the Congregational Church in the 18th century, who has been mis-remembered as a fire and brimstone preacher. Okay, that's a bit true. Even the musical *Hamilton* takes a moment to describe him that way, because he was the grandfather of Aaron Burr. But Edwards was a product of his time, and there are riches in his work.

What Jonathan Edwards mainly desired was for people to experience the transformative grace of God. One of his important writings was on *"Religious Affections."* He argued that we should pay attention to our affections (our emotions) because they affect the "inclination and will of the soul."

Our emotional lives will direct the inclination and will of our souls.

We have learned that emotional and rational intelligence are not exclusive, but complementary. Without healthy emotional work, people come up with rational reasons for terrible things, or become lost in ideas bereft of meaning.

In the next four weeks, join me to consider how we may nurture and recognize the emotional life that is a gift from God to nurture us, including feelings of gratitude, incompleteness, and awe.

I'll see you in church.

Peace,

Rev. Dr. Matthew Wooster
Senior Minister

A MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MODERATOR

February 6, 2018

Dear Fellow Church Members and Friends,

We write you as our church and lives have moved quickly into 2018. Lent, a period of reflection and anticipation, is soon upon. After our recent annual meeting, in which important matters concerning our current church year and longer term were discussed and voted on, we believe our church is entering an important, broader period of reflection and anticipation.

In our annual meeting, we elected the proposed slate of Church Officers and Support Board members. We heard a detailed presentation of the Facilities Condition Assessment Plan (FCAP) and related considerations regarding our church buildings and property. We discussed the recommendation (and need) of next steps, including development of a WHCC Master Plan in 2018. And, ultimately, we voted on and approved a budget that allocates funding toward our 2018 plans and priorities.

All of the progress and important next steps in the life of our church would not have been possible without the significant efforts by so many members and the church staff; many evenings in 2017 were spent meeting, considering, discussing, praying, and planning the items that were brought to a vote in our annual meeting. Thank you to everyone for those often unseen, but highly appreciated, efforts!

With the context of the annual meeting and related votes by our congregation, the Church Council met this past week to put into action next steps related to the budget, master planning process, and more. Our goal is to have two committees, under the guidance and authority of the Church Council, move forward to: 1) develop a WHCC master plan and 2) evaluate and recommend funding options toward the future needs of our church. For both of these committees, we plan to have multiple forums to engage and listen to all our members.

For those two areas, we are looking for members who have experience and/or a passion in planning and funding. Architects, engineers, planners, designers, parents, musicians, finance professionals and more are most needed and welcome to support the two committees to be formed. Time commitments can vary, and all inputs, ideas and efforts will be welcome – no input or participation will be “too small”. So, we kindly ask that members seeking to help (or just learn more) reach out to anyone in the Moderator’s Office or on the Church staff.

This year, with reflection and anticipation, we have great hopes to move the history and mission of our church forward. Please join us.

Faithfully,

Gintas Vildzius, Moderator
Janeen S. Hansen, Moderator Emerita
Mary Hill Canavan, Rising Moderator