

May 6, 2022

Dear Friends –

The flowers in my yard no longer fear the frost in the same way as a week ago. The chickens are free-ranging and actually finding bugs. The snow tires are off, the sun-hat is on, and the weather has turned, finally it seems, toward the spring. Yes, it was 35 degrees when I woke up this morning, but it's still Vermont, right?



With all of this in mind, I am especially grateful for the 40 or so of you who have been taking the time after worship these past few weeks, to attend the Vision Team's second-hour educational sessions. Trust me, I know how tempting a bluebird day can be, and I am grateful that so many of you are choosing to spend one more hour with us inside before heading out to the hills (or the beach, or the garden...).

For those of you who haven't yet joined us – don't worry, there's still time! You can catch up on the last two weeks [here](#). But time *is* running out.

1. **This week, after worship** (and before your Mother's Day brunch), we will discuss some of the ideas that were generated during our congregational feedback sessions in 2021. Then we'll talk about how to put those ideas into the form of a proposal.
2. **Next week, after worship**, in response to your requests, we have added a special zoom session, to create space for us to brainstorm with one another. Where is there creative energy flowing? What excites you in what others are talking about?
3. All **preliminary vision proposals will be due by May 22**, and will be presented in electronic form the following week.
4. Discussion of proposals and in-person voting will happen the next week, **May 29**.

Yes, May 29.

Yes, Memorial Day weekend.

No, the marathon doesn't get in the way. (The earlier start time and route change mean you can still get here! We promise!) If you can't get here because you're running, or away, e-voting is an option, up until May 27.

And we really ***do need you.***

Because after the meeting on the 29th, the chosen proposals will have the summer to sort out more of the details, to be presented at a congregational meeting in the fall. Without your input – yes, YOU – we won't have a realistic sense of where the Spirit is moving in the congregation.

Friends, I know the hills are calling (cue Julie Andrews here). I really do. But it is also springtime here at First Church. When was the last time you were *anywhere* and told to dream – really dream – without limits? To think about the difference you want to make in the community, in the congregation, and have the ability to make it happen? To hear *others'* dreams, and be able to support *them*?

This doesn't just happen. Not in churches, but not anywhere, really. We are in a unique time in the life of this community, and maybe even Burlington proper. Whether or not we are able to capitalize on it really does depend on the amount of involvement we get from “the congregation” – which means **you.**

So, although it may be a futile thing to tell Vermonters: I hope you resist the call of the mountains – but **just** for an additional hour after worship this week, next week, and the 29th. I think you'll find it'll be worth it. Not just for the church – but for you.

In gratitude, and in faith,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elissa".

[The Rev. Elissa Johnk](#), Lead Minister