

LAKE OSWEGO UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Sabbatical Planning: "Concerns and Covenant"

There is a church song, I think it is by Avery and Marsh. It goes something like this:

*I am the church, you are the church
We are the church together, everywhere you go
All around the world, yes we're the church together.
The church is not a building, the church is not a steeple
The church is not a resting place,
The church is a people.*

The words to this song came to mind when I read the comments from our Sabbatical discussion at Annual Meeting. Several tables had listed a concern that church attendance and giving would lag while Jennie was gone. If our congregation was not healthy and growing I probably would be worried about that too. But what I see is a group of people who have covenanted with each other to be the church.

Members all signed the covenant when we joined LOUCC. Signing the scroll and seeing all the other names of people who had committed to be a faithful community was a powerful moment for me. It reminded me that we were intentionally binding our lives together so we would not be alone on the journey but would support, love and challenge each other to grow into our callings as spiritual, giving people.

Jennie's ministry has had a significant role in LOUCC's health. Her presence is a joy and comfort. But our covenant to each other isn't negated in her absence. When we joined this congregation we were committing to support the church by our attendance in worship, our participation in mission locally and worldwide and our time and talent. I have no doubt that our covenant to this community and faith expression will allow us to joyfully explore some new activities and focus while Jennie is renewing her spirit. We will be successful during the Sabbatical because of our covenant with Jennie and each other.

Blessings,
Bee Neufeld and Sabbatical Team