

**October 2021 Minister's Musings**  
**Soul Matters Theme: Cultivating Relationship**

On the last Saturday in September, we held two leadership workshops to which all were invited. One workshop focused on the Board Initiative to educate the congregation and schedule a vote to adopt the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle. You should be hearing more from the Board about that in the coming weeks and months.

The other workshop was titled, "Thinking Big." It was focused on visioning for the future, based on a report I made for the Board upon my return from sabbatical. The report was also connected to the sermon I gave on May 16 called "Living Within Our Means." You can [read it on my blog](#). As part of that workshop, we explored the concept of "Gathered" and "Sent" as a way to view the dozens of activities that we conduct in the congregation.

**Gathered** means those activities we do to as a gathered people to strengthen our own souls, our own organization. They are inward focused. You can say they benefit what happens within our walls, be they brick and mortar walls or virtual walls.

**Sent** means those activities that benefit the world beyond our walls, that are outward (or missional) focused. These do not necessarily have a direct benefit to us or our organization, though Sent activities help to distinguish us as a religious organization, rather than just a social club that focuses on our own comfort or incidental charity.

For instance, our [website](#) is a "sent" activity: its focus is to inform the public about who we are. The audience for the content is largely folks who are not yet connected to the congregation. This is largely true of our Facebook page, though less so. Sometimes [our Facebook page](#) is used by congregants to gain information, but it's built to inform the public and ideally as an outreach tool. Our weekly eblast is a "gathered," as it is addressed to people already associated with the congregation, as is our private Facebook group, "[TUS Care-Ring](#)."

Together we went through a list of activities and discussed whether they belonged in the Gathered or Sent categories, or a third category: a mix of both. It was not a quiz, with the answer key known only by the Minister. It was a shared learning as we went along.

I don't know what others came away with. For me, I learned that

- this is a helpful, and challenging, way to assess nearly all of our congregational efforts; I encourage committees and task forces to continue to use it as a way to assess what we are doing, why we are doing it, for whom we think we are doing it;
- while all activities may have a primary category to which they belong, there might be aspects of that activity that belong in the other category;
- there are different ways to approach nearly every activity and doing so might change either the intention of the activity, or its impact; and
- while I can see an activity as belonging in one category, when I hear a different perspective from someone else, my whole vision is enlarged and enriched.

There is so much learning to do as part of this shared ministry. I am blessed to be on this journey with you. ~ Rev. Karen