

VISION 2030

March 3, 2020

Annual Gathering Opening Dinner

Michael Readinger

For those of you have just arrived, be sure to ask your friends in the room about yesterday's trip to the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel and last evening's reflection time hosted by Mary, Michael Ann and Nichelle from UCAN. The room was filled with 43 participants whose 843 years of collective ministry reminded us of this courageous movement led by wounded healers! It was a very powerful start to this meeting and an important reminder about the relevance of this year's Annual Gathering theme in our past, in the present and for the future. And, be sure to ask them about this morning's affinity group meetings or the Labor of Love service project at United Church Home's Woodhollow Glen here in Memphis. The affinity group meetings are always spirit-filled and informative. And, I do not know if CHHSM has ever done a service project before, but this was the first time for me in the 15 years I have been around!

As we spend the next few days exploring the meaning, the relevance and the importance of "Justice and Grace – Together", let's be mindful of all that has come before us, all that is happening here and now and what might yet be! Tomorrow morning's opening plenary will be an exciting and informative historical reminder of where we have been in the UCC's social justice journey. There will also be many workshops and sessions that provide examples of where we are today. And, of course, everything we do now shapes our future. But, before we close on Thursday, the CHHSM Board invites you all to participate in a special

process of creating a Vision 2030 together. This will not be any one person's vision. In fact, the only way it can be visionary at all is if we all provide input and ideas to create a collaborative version of the future that draws on our collective wisdom!

As we gather here today, CHHSM's vision statement: Together we create a just, caring and compassionate world is relevant, focused and aspirational. Will that still be the case in 10 years? Maybe, maybe not! The goal is to create a vision for 2030. That will probably require a progression of changes to our current vision during this decade as we move towards what we envision the future state to be.

Consider this, and I paraphrase from Dan Brown in his novel *Origins*:

"It took early humans over a million years to progress from discovering fire to inventing the wheel. Then it took only a few thousand years to invent the printing press. Then it took only a couple hundred years to build a telescope. In the centuries that followed, in ever shortening spans, we bounded from the steam engine, to gas powered automobiles, to the space shuttle! And then, it took only 2 decades for us to start modifying our own DNA! We now measure scientific progress in months. We are advancing at a mind-boggling pace. It will not take long before today's fastest supercomputer will look like an abacus. Today's most advanced surgical methods will seem barbaric and today's energy sources will seem as quaint to us as using a candle to light a room! The early Greeks had to look back centuries to study ancient culture, but we need look back only a single generation to find those who lived without the technologies we take for granted today. The timeline of human development is compressing; the space that separates ancient and modern is shrinking to nothing at all. And for that reason, the next few years in human development will be shocking, disruptive, and wholly unimaginable."

In this construct, who can know what the next 10 years will bring? Where will advancements in technology and medical research take us? How will the future of global economics transform our business models? What will the world look like with all the changes in technology, our society, our politics, economics and our culture?

The CHHSM Board is asking you to explore this Vision 2030 together. Think about where we may find ourselves in 10 years? What are our Hopes and aspirations? Ask yourself:

- 1) What would the world look like if there was no hunger or famine, no homelessness, no cancer or other diseases, accessible healthcare for all, equal rights for all, environmental stability and healing, no war, worldwide literacy and equal access to education?
- 2) What would it look like if we actually realized the UCC's three great loves - Love of neighbor, love of creation, love of children AND CHHSM's vision that together we create a just, caring and compassionate world? If that really came to pass, think about where we may be and what will be in 10 years?

Imagine the state of organized religion in general? The UCC specifically?

Will the state of the Association industry (now 100 years old) remain the same in general? What about faith-based associations specifically?

How will CHHSM's relevance to its members be different? And, member connections to each other, the UCC, the wider Church?

What will the key advocacy issues be?

Think about sustainability issues centered around funding streams and service delivery modalities?

- 3) What will your local community be like? How will people live near each other and relate to each other?
- 4) What will you yourself be like? In fact, many of us will be not here in 10 years. What are we committing to that will provide for the future generations?

So, we ask you to think about these questions and the others that will be on the APP and displayed on the screen during our plenary session and meals in the next day and a half. Then, bring your appetite for lunch and visioning with you on Thursday as we spend some generative time together. The CHHSM Board will be listening to what you have to say. Vision 2030 is an important initiative for our association and the Church. Please give us all you have got! Thank you. Enjoy your dinner!