

3rd Way Collective Congregational Meeting Report – February 2018

Thank you for your ongoing support for 3rd Way Collective! In many ways it seems like we just began, while our increasing community and campus affirmation makes it feel like we've been a part of this landscape for many years.

Our school year thus far has included a variety of connecting points through events and activities, but our most meaningful connections happen primarily around a table. Our home cooked meals continue to be meaningful ways for students to connect with community members across generations, and students continue to reach out to me (Ben) to connect for spiritual support, community connectivity, mentoring, or just a listening presence to talk through stages of life.

3rd Way Collective continues to be seen as a collaborative force capable of bringing together a broad cross-section of our community. In this school year we have been asked to collaborate on events and issues such as the MLK Commemoration week, Stand for State's initiative on bystander intervention, State of the Story's collaboration with Learning to Live: What's Your story?, Penn State's Living Library, Grad Student Unionization, area environmental advocacy, interfaith connectivity, and numerous collaborative projects with other student organizations.

Our spring semester is still gearing up for several significant events including our annual Palm Sunday Peace Walk, a non-violent conflict resolution training session, our spring break trip to help rebuild Houston, and hosting Ted & Company for two more theatrical performances.

I've enjoyed being present in various church pulpits this past year, sharing the story of our work at Penn State with a few different congregations – both here in State College, as well as beyond. In addition to our collaborative support from University Baptist & Brethren Church, I was recently contacted by the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Centre County asking if their congregation could be a more formal partner in the work we are doing.

I also admit that my own anxiety is increasing as we move toward a time, once again, in discernment for the financial feasibility of another year of this organization moving forward. In the midst of that tension I want to say thank you for continuing to offer your support as we move forward and consider the future. I'm grateful for the way this congregation continues to believe in this work!