

September 06

Autumn greetings! It seems like this season always begins with the question: 'So, how was your summer?' It has been a full and exciting summer in our household ... a summer that began with studies at the Association of Chicago Theological School ... a midsummer wedding encircled by love and support from our family and friends and our family of faith ... a summer that ended with the welcome news that Jacqueline Switzer will join us as our new team mate in ministry. In mid June, I joined a class of 28 clergy from as far south as Austin, Texas; as far east as Richmond, VA; and as far west and north as EDMONTON. It was and is a rich experience of community with colleagues, diversity of race, age, ethnicity, tradition and theological expression. This is a community I will be with for each of the next two summers as we learn together and teach each other what we have and are learning about preaching.



This course of study requires that I, together with members of our congregation, discern a project that would be a good learning for me and for our congregation over the coming year. I have thought a lot about who we are together; what it means that we choose to gather in a circle around a round table; what it means that we try to make decisions about our common life by consensus; what it means that we teach our children in 'learning circles'. In these next few months, I would like to work with the image of 'roundtable people, roundtable pulpit.' I am attempting to explore conversational preaching in some of my reflections this year ... by this, I mean to be intentional about trying to reflect on some of the conversations we have with each other between Sundays about what is happening in our world, in our lives and in the lessons we hear read in worship on Sunday. I will be working with a group within the congregation who will help me in this way and will seek feedback from many of you about your experience of being a roundtable people seeking to design a more roundtable pulpit.



I love the geography of our worship space ... there is no raised platform, no pulpit six feet above contradiction. The table as symbol of radical equality, genuine hospitality and deep conversation is the focal point when we gather. I believe this central symbol deeply informs who we are and how we live and share our faith. As we inch closer to being a '40 year old community of faith', it feels like a time to live into our identity as people of the round table. Who knows where our table talk will take us? Blessed be the journey.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nancy'.

Nancy Steeves