

**Report to Convention 2022**  
**The Rev. Jennifer Gregg,**  
**Missioner for Servant Leadership**

**Cathedral of the Beloved**

Much of our work this past year has been focused on infrastructure. This has included completing our: Employee Handbook, Volunteer/Intern Guidelines, Organizational Handbook and a re-writing of our Constitution and By-laws. As a SAWC (Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community), our re-written Constitution and By-laws were approved by the New England Synod Council this fall. For this, we give great thanks!

This year we welcomed new staff member and intern to our community. This summer we hired new associate, The Rev. Jennifer Kimball. We also welcomed Margot Sangor, a candidate for Holy Orders to the diaconate, as an intern.

Worship with a shared meal continued to be offered each week on the lawn. During Easter, we introduced greater creativity into our worship reclaiming the oral tradition of storytelling. Members of the community took on roles to embody weekly readings. The liveliness it offered and the reflection of becoming one of the characters, especially when one plays Jesus, has been awe-inspiring. This fall, we began a Contemplative Service with Holy Communion at Zion Lutheran. This has been a deep space of rest for those who have gathered.

Following services, to engage feedback and support leadership development within the community, we are holding community meetings. Thus far we have held 2, discussing issues of community housing access and personal safety within the Cathedral community.

We continue to meet once a week at Dottie's Coffee Lounge in downtown Pittsfield. A vital connection for community and fellowship, this small initiative at the outset, now continues to welcome between 11-15 people on average.



Cathedral of the Beloved leadership has also focused on the following:

**Discernment of Beloved Campus:**



Last year we were recipients of a New Episcopal Church Seed Grant to begin to explore and discern what it would be like to reimagine downtown Pittsfield as a campus of congregations. Part of our work this year was creating a regular space for moderators/wardens of these parishes to begin to get to know one another. What we learned was while our buildings are all in proximity, the key leadership, many of whom were vital to negotiating the pandemic for their community, did not know each other. These conversations led to several different holy experiments; a shared Easter Vigil, two shared downtown services, and a collective effort to affirm and bless the employees of Pittsfield Public Schools. Participants of the shared downtown services and Easter Vigil have included: South Congregational, First Congregational, St. Stephen's and Zion. Participants of the Service of Blessing and Affirmation for Pittsfield Public Schools (as of this writing)

include: Kneset Israel, Temple Anshe Amunim, Islamic Center, St. Stephen's, Zion Lutheran, South Congregational, First Congregational, Second Congregational, First, Methodist.

**Covid Grant: MA Council of Churches:**

We were also a recipient of \$4,000 from the MA Council of Churches Covid Grant. Grants were distributed to faith communities to promote Covid vaccines. Twice a week social media posts were made for education about Covid and access to vaccines. One portion of our grant focused on educating children and families. Featured were a "super-hero" mascot and Sammy the Star. Through local community events like Pittsfield's 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday, we celebrated children and families who have been super-heroes through this pandemic while providing educational coloring books and flyers on the benefits of the Covid vaccine. We worked with Mobile Vaccine Unit in Pittsfield to provide a family friendly clinic complete with Ben and Jerry's ice cream, super-hero capes, and other child friendly activities.



**Stone Soup and Cathedral Cooks:**



In the Spring, one of our young adults shared her love of the book Stone Soup with the community of Cathedral of the Beloved. Two weeks later, we had an ingathering of ingredients from the community, including a stone, to make our own stone soup together.

This experience led to an application and receipt of a diocesan grant to begin a Cathedral Cooks! Initiative. Cathedral Cooks!, brings members of the community together once monthly to plan, cook, and invite a guest to a special and shared dinner meal.



**Loving the Questions**  
**The Rev. Jennifer Gregg and Craig Hammond,**  
**Co-Facilitators**

“... we know how to create spaces that invite the intellect to show up, to argue its case, to make its point. We know how to create spaces that invite the emotions to show up, to express anger or joy. We know how to create spaces that invite the will to show up, to consolidate effort and energy round a common task. And we surely know how to create spaces that invite the ego to show up, preening itself and claiming its turf! But we seem to know very little about creating spaces that invite the soul to show up, this core of ourselves, our selfhood.”  
—Parker J. Palmer, *A Hidden Wholeness*

This quote from Parker Palmer in his book *Hidden Wholeness* continues to be a guide and reference point within *Loving the Questions*. As the community that gathers discerns individually, we as facilitators co-creating this space, listen simultaneously to the Holy Spirit, discerning what is necessary in this cohort, sometimes in this very moment, for the soul to show up. This work of letting down the facades we so often carry in this world, takes courage. With this in mind, we have begun to talk about *Loving the Questions* being a brave space. This brave space, held and made manifest in small group spiritual direction, gives us the chance to speak and listen to God’s still small voice moving within and through our lives, and give space to be more fully known.



Our 2021-2022 Cohort, ended with 17 participants. At our closing service, we welcomed The Rt. Rev. Alan Gates, Bishop of the Diocese of Massachusetts, and The Rt. Rev. Douglas Fisher, our diocesan bishop, LTQ participants clergy sponsors to celebrate and honor the good work that had been done throughout our time together. Two participants shared their LTQ experience in engaging presentations and music was offered by another participant.

The 2021-2022 Cohort was each matched with a professionally trained coach through the Together We Thrive initiative. This was the second year offering this opportunity to participants. LTQ participants grew in their understanding of what professional coaching offered and met with their coaches on average between 6 and 11 times in the roughly 8 months it was offered. Averaging at least one time a month.

In September, we welcomed our 2022-2023 cohort with 18 participants in two different time zones and representing four different dioceses: Western Massachusetts, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Spokane.

This summer we partnered with Shalem Institute for Spiritual Direction to offer a private online training in Group Spiritual Direction. There were 10 participants that joined under this effort to introduce and train a core group in group spiritual direction. These also included 2 staff members from Cathedral of the Beloved.

We continue to be grateful for all the many partnerships that make Loving the Questions a dynamic and deeply enriching space. We give thanks to each partner who are committed to deeply listening with us for the Spirit's movement:



- Mary Meader and Julia Slayton
- Br. Jim Woodrum and SSJE
- Together We Thrive, The Rev. Heather Ramsey-Mabrouk and The Rev. Claire Bamberg
- Shalem Institute for Spiritual Direction and Nan Weir
- Lois Lindbloom and her work on Group Spiritual Direction, especially her pamphlets, "Prayerful Listening: Cultivating Discernment as a Way of Life" and "Is that you, God – Cultivating Discernment."

Outside of this, Craig and I presented to the National Gathering of Deacons on Loving the Questions in the spring of 2022. We have also received inquiries as to how to help move parishes through this process.

### **Professional Coaching:**

This year, Together We Thrive offered clergy the opportunity to work with a professionally trained coach for the year for a set fee. 8 clergy from our diocese have participated in this opportunity. This opportunity is ongoing and is offered several times a year for various start times.

Diocesan coaches have walked with Loving the Questions participants and continue to offer services as requested. Together We Thrive is offering its final training for coaching under the Lilly Foundation grant beginning this fall. We have one participant from this diocese within this cohort: The Rev. Michael Hamilton, Deacon.

Active coaches in our diocese are: The Rev. Dave Woessner, The Rev. Mary Frances Curns, The Rev. Heather Blais, John Cheek and myself.

Outside of these areas of service, I continue to co-lead Fresh Start for new clergy in our diocese and serve on the Together We Thrive Steering Committee.

Faithfully Submitted,

Jenny+