

RM Corner for February 2018

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Greetings from Kirk in the Hills! Although it's already been five months since I came to the Kirk, First Pres continues to be fresh on my mind. Not a single day passes by without wistfully thinking back to my formative years at First Pres or applying the skills I've learned there. If I had a penny every time I talked about how they do things at First Pres, I'd be able to retire in less than a year! The first challenge I faced at the Kirk was to recruit Sunday school teachers for children. It was August when I first started at the Kirk, and I needed teachers by September. I thought about what Debbie MacVey would do and gathered as many names as possible and contacted them one by one. By the time September rolled around, I had twenty-two teachers ready to teach!

My next challenge was to pilot small groups much like the ones at First Pres. I thought back to Olivier Jolliet and the lessons he taught me in recruiting hosts and facilitators. And I thought about how Jay Sanderford would always create subgroups to carry on specific ministries. So, I formed a small group steering committee, and they recruited hosts and facilitators for eight small groups for Advent. The hosts and facilitators loved it so much that 100% of them signed up to lead our Lenten small groups! Following in Melissa Anne's footsteps, I put together a Daily Advent Devotional for the Kirk. Everyone loved it so much that I am now working on recruiting writers for the Daily Lenten Devotional. Furthermore, whenever I lead worship on Sundays, I use the liturgical resources Tom Granum gave me. I speak with the voice and stand in the posture trained by Doris Granum. In planning for Adult Lenten Series, I think about the Adult Ed group at First Pres, and many ways in which they taught me plan Adult Education classes. Now that I'm looking ahead to Eastertide, I'm thinking about doing the J2A2 Walk Sandy Talbott had led at First Pres. All the excellent people I've met and transformative ministries I have experienced at First Pres have truly become the bedrock of my work at the Kirk.

After a long day like today, I sit back and wonder out loud, "How can I possibly enjoy ministry at the Kirk as much as I do now if I had not been a Resident Minister at First Pres?" Especially now that the Kirk is wrapped up in the excitement of starting a residency program of its own (hallelujah!), I think about the late Rudi Ansbacher often, who was a relentless champion of the Residency Program at First Pres. His legacy lives on in the ministries of residents he had supported and cared for since the inception of the program. I am filled with gratitude at the skills I've learned and relationships I've built at First Pres. Thank you. I would not be the pastor I am today if First Pres did not invest in me!

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