

I am grateful to be here and serve as your Exec Director.

I want to thank the board for putting their trust in me; thank the search committee-- I was very impressed with the professionalism of the committee and the wonderful process they created.

Thank the staff and crew of Ferry Beach who created a wonderful summer for so many, including me. I appreciate your patience in helping me understand the ways Ferry Beach operates.

Thank conference coordinators, musicians and ministers of the week as well as workshop leaders who make the conferences a success.

Finally, I want to thank the conferees and members who come here each summer, young and old, new to Ferry Beach and those who have grown up here. I appreciate all of you.

This morning I would like to share some ideas I have after my first summer. They have the advantage of an outsider's perspective. So they might not square exactly with what has been done, but might be worth considering as we explore the ways to address our future.

When my daughters were little, there had been an early morning summer rainstorm and as I drove them to daycare, a beautiful rainbow graced the sky. As I pointed it out to them, Mae, who was 4 at the time said, "you mean rainbows are in real life?" and I said, "Yes." And she said: "Than we need a fast car."

I said, "why do we need a fast car?"

To which she exclaimed: "Because there is a pot of gold at the end of that rainbow."

For many of us Ferry Beach may be the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. And we are already here at our destination.

But thinking about the financial issues that we heard from Paul and Carolyn, I like to think that we still **need that fast car**, so we can get to the pot of gold and assure the financial future of Ferry Beach.

So how do we get our fast car?

As many of you know, and as you heard others share, we need to address some critical issues:

- Financial – addressing the short and long term debt issues
- Keep up with Technology and Marketing with Technology: being able to keep up with the changes that our "customer's" demand – such as a flashy website, on-line registration, social networking, etc. while also honoring those of us who are not tech savvy.
- Leadership – Growing our leadership core – both people who are already on board and new people who would like to volunteer their time, talent and treasure. Leadership will build the foundation for our future.

Before I talk more specifically about those three issues. I want to fly up a little higher for a different perspective - I wonder if we need to look at the way people outside of Ferry Beach look at us.

How do we simply and concisely answer the question: Who are we? Who or what is Ferry Beach? (When you say Mercedes or Ford you are talking about cars, but very different types.)

As one conferee shared just this week, someone in her congregation heard she was going and said quite warily, “will you tell me about it when you get back?” We don’t have a clear impression out there.

The world we live in now is all about marketing and sound bites. We have all just been through the Republican national convention. Clearly it points out – life is a sound bite.

How do we clearly and concisely tell our story? Not for profits, with limited advertising dollars know they may have only **one chance** to catch someone’s attention.

As a best practice, most not for profits visit their brand every now and then to refresh it.

That “brand refresh” is also a great opportunity for renewal and a chance to rejuvenate the leaders and volunteers who help make a not for profit sing. It also clearly articulates for everyone – who we are, setting our shared intention!

Lily Tomlin once said, “I always wanted to be somebody, I should have been more specific.”

Do the words that people use about Ferry Beach outside of us fit with what we want them to say??

At the core of successful not for profits and for profits, is usually a simple mission statement and a statement of values which captures hearts and minds.

I love the mission that is written in our by-laws – but it is a little long winded (imagine that as Unitarian Universalists) It would be too long or to write on a business card much less share it in an elevator ride. And, as times have changed it is not as “universally” understood.

When you are really clear about your core, it is much easier to make decisions about the future. Where should we look for more money? What programs and activities should we offer? How should leadership training look?

A quick example, when I was at the Girl Scouts our national organization changed its mission to say: “We build girls of courage, confidence and character who make the world a better place.” That was clear—so clear, I can still recite it for you. But what it did was help me support the leadership of our adult volunteers. When someone came to me with a good idea or a not so good idea I could say to them, “does it build girls of courage, confidence and character?” And if the answer was no, then they couldn’t do it and call it Girl Scouts.

**Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “The ancestor of every action is a thought.”** For the Girl Scouts, it really boiled down to one thought, one overall **big idea** and that was Leadership.

Now many of you may have ideas about what in **essence, is the Ferry Beach brand** – or the Ferry Beach core -- This summer I could feel a number of core ideas –

- reunion
- communion
- family, community
- Universalism
- Unitarianism
- Transformation
- Renewal
- Enlightenment
- Fun
- Creativity

Alvin Toffler said “you’ve got to think about the big things, while you’re doing the small things so that all the small things go in the right direction.”

As I said yesterday at the town hall, I have asked the board to work on this core idea and mission at their annual retreat, so that we might begin to generate excitement and enthusiasm for our future endeavors.

So back to those three core issues Financial; Technology and Marketing and Leadership:

The last one first: My commitment for this next year related to fostering Leadership includes these smaller actions that I believe will foster leadership growth:

- Documenting our work. What does the minister or the musician of the week do? What do the conference coordinators need to do before the conference, during the conference, after the conference? What does Ferry Beach need to provide?
- By next summer I hope to have in place some really clear, written task lists for each of the roles volunteers play in the summer.
- Being Clear About Expectations: Once we have those specifics written down, what is the best way to hold each other accountable? My goal is to have a memorandum of understanding with each and every conference coordinator, workshop leader, musician and minister of the week that clearly spells out what is expected of each.
- How do we know how to congratulate ourselves for a job well done when we are not clear about what the job is? How do we foster growth in leadership when we don’t have clear expectations of one another?

Creating a core training for all of our volunteers: When we are clear about our core values and core mission, it is much easier to create a training program that is shared throughout the system. Of course, it may take longer than a year to build this – but we will start. When volunteers have a

clear core mission in place, it is much easier for all of us to work together toward that end goal. Without it, we may miss the mark we intended to reach.

Boots on the ground, shared leadership is a great thing when everyone is committed to the same goal. Lack and scarcity are replaced with abundance and prosperity when there is commitment to core beliefs.

And I need some help: on the wall over there are some sign up sheets for some projects and some task forces, before you leave, please take a look at those and sign up.

### Marketing and Technology

- Not for profits live and die on their databases. While we have one, there is information that is not accurate or up to date. It needs to be shared across staff and made easy to access information within it.
- Web design and Social Media
- Can we do things that share the Ferry Beach story when there is a foot of snow on the ground? And what would that look like? A phone app? More contacts from the beach to your email? Face book?
- Marketing to targeted groups (pottery guilds, arts groups, and the like) and new congregations (there is a sign up sheet on the side over there to help us with that.) Maybe even looking at congregations beyond New England. A woman from Philly said to me this last week, “don’t forget to send us some information about next year’s conferences.”

### Financial

- Successful companies take measured and calculated risks. They make assessments about what they have, take action and assess again to determine impact. We will be assessing what new risks we might take to boost our numbers.
- Some of those might include more 2 and 3 day offerings and activities in the Fall and Spring. Without impacting the Ecology School, are there other ways we can use our space?
- Sustaining members – asking (several people have told me they completed their capital gift and would keep giving but were not asked)
- 10% more people here each week and review of Comps for conferences
- One really good annual fundraising event that becomes our signature event in the New England area. (The event would get our brand out, and build supporters.)
- By co-locating with the Ecology School, we benefit both organizations. How can we best foster continued growth for both organizations?

Our financial changes will take time and a change in attitude and culture. But as Mark Twain said, “I am an old man and have known many troubles, but most of them never happened.”

As a community of faith, we’ll exercise some of our beliefs in the capital “G” Good of who we are and what we are to one another. Terry Tempest Williams writes in her book Refuge:

“Faith is the centerpiece of a connected life. It allows us to live by the grace of invisible strands. It is a belief in a wisdom superior to our own.” How can we as Ferry Beachers, live from that place of faith that helps draw to us the resources and people we need to carry out our mission?

If rainbows are in real life, then pots of gold can be too – maybe and perhaps, if, we also believe in fast cars or fast boats!

Marianne Williamson in her book Return to Love writes: “Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are **powerful** beyond measure.”

What if that is true of Ferry Beach...we are powerful beyond measure? Not one of us, but all of us, understanding our role in making this world, this place, a better place.

Quillen Shin wanted “thousands of people” (according to the Universalists at Ferry Beach history) to come to the Beach each summer. Can we continue to be a magnet for good, a magnet for enlightenment that attracts people so that they might go back out into the world and do the social justice work we all know needs to be done?

Marianne Williamson goes on to say: “It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.” Paraphrasing Williamson: “We ask ourselves, Who are we to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are we *not* to be?”

Ferry Beach Park Association has a legacy of being fabulous. Yet sometimes we forget the treasure we have here in this place, its people and in our message. Clearly articulating and refreshing our mission and remembering who we are will propel us to new success.

Williamson’s last line in this oft quoted paragraph is one I hope all of us as members of Ferry Beach take to heart: “Our playing small does not serve the world.”

There are far too many spiritual giants who come to Ferry Beach as conferees, ministers, musicians, coordinators and workshop leaders for us to play small, or to look to someone else to solve the challenges facing us today.

Let’s work together, step up into our greatness and serve the world. Won’t you join me?

Thank you.