

Along the Way
September 6 The Hive of Being

The beginning of the church program year reminds me of a beehive. Church staff, clergy and volunteers are buzzing around the church preparing to welcome everyone to another year of worship, service activities and educational opportunities.

Ten years ago, a friend of mine invited me to join her in a beekeeping adventure. Over the years, we have tended between two and five hives. I have learned a great deal about bee behavior, sometimes the hard way. I now make it a goal to get through the season without a sting! It is possible.

In a hive, every bee has an assignment, a role to play and a way to be. Scientists don't know exactly how all these assignments and tasks are communicated, but we do know that one way is by dancing. The female worker bees assigned with gathering pollen return to the hive and communicate by dancing out their GPS coordinates. Communication is the key to the hive's survival.

And so it is with the church. I am not sure we can dance our way to better communication, although that would be interesting. The church leadership has made a commitment to good communication, so we will be receiving regular updates from our search committees and the Embroidery Implementation Committee.

In times of conflict, we follow Nonviolent Communication practices. If you are unfamiliar with NVC, I would encourage you to join a workshop hosted [Wednesdays](#) and [on Nov. 9](#) at our church. But in its simplest form Nonviolent Communication goes as such: Observe and recap (a sign that you are listening), describe emotions, not positions, identify needs (the emotions we experience when we're upset are connected to an unmet need), and then work together with direct requests.

Using respectful communication is a healthy way to be in the world. It involves being present with an open heart and, at a church, it means listening together for God's voice. Let's make our hive strong, for our survival does depend on it.

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