

## Greetings from Rev. Frank Hall, Minister Emeritus

As I jot a few lines to offer words of welcome I remember the little game with two hands intertwined and you say ‘this is the church,’ then you move your two index fingers up to make a steeple and you say, ‘and this is the steeple,’ then you wiggle the remaining fingers and say, ‘open the doors and see all the people.’ I’ll try to do that on this page.

I realize, of course, that it sounds a bit frivolous – and this is such serious business, this church-and-minister business. It’s so serious that it has to be lightened up. Our colleague Forrest Church used to say, ‘*angels can fly because they take themselves lightly.*’

A couple of weeks ago the Search Committee asked me to write a welcome note to you and I’ve been thinking about it ever since. I’m reminded of my experience thirty years ago, when I spent a day with Arnold Westwood, the first called minister at the Unitarian Church in Westport; and a few hours with both Ed Lane and Bob Swain, the other ministers who served here. I listened carefully – I wanted to be sure it was ‘a good match.’

Arnold told me it was his *best experience* in his long ministry; Ed talked about the *potential* for a robust congregation in Westport and the area; Bob was circumspect, acknowledging that his ministry never really got ‘off the ground,’ as we say, but he didn’t hesitate to *encourage* me.

Now you’re in the position I was in, way back then; and I’m in *their* position. It was my third, and best experience in ministry; it has lots of potential and I don’t hesitate to encourage you. It’s a wonderful, challenging congregation who draw out the best in a minister. Jack Mendelsohn put it nicely: “Good congregations and good ministers create one another.”

‘This is the church’ – it’s a very special architectural statement, designed by Victor Lundy. The thing I most appreciate about the sanctuary is that it connects the worshiper with Nature; it’s inspirational without imposing a particular theological bent. Emerson talked about ‘the good ear’ of the listener who can ‘draw supplies to virtue out of very indifferent (sermons).’ The architecture enhances a Nature-driven spirituality that offers something very special to persons on every point on the broadest theological spectrum.

When I arrived here, the present ‘meeting house’ was a parsonage, where I lived with my family for just one year. I knew, then, that it would be a long-term stay, so I bought a house in Westport and the parsonage was rented until we renovated it to accommodate a growing religious education program, with a solid and active high school youth group. The Meeting House has been put to a variety of uses.

The main thing I want you to know is that I am committed to being a good colleague – I will not interfere with your developing ministry, and will, to the best of my ability, support you in that process, keeping an appropriate distance and responding to your invitation to collaborate.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Frank".