



Finding Our Rhythm

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Swimming vexes me. First, I can't see a lick without my contacts, and I've never invested in a good set of swim goggles. So, I'm either swimming blindly without contacts, or trying to keep my head out of the water. Second, I can't breathe underwater. I understand the basics of the crawl, turning my head to find the pocket of air as my arm comes up. The problem is I get winded as I swim. When I want more air, the only solution is to swim faster, so that I can take my breaths more often with each stroke. Swimming faster makes me even more winded...you see the dilemma. I can't find my rhythm.



These frustrations came to mind at the annual luncheon for the Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee. Joined by a dozen or more leaders from around our Presbytery – as well as hundreds of people from various religious traditions, we celebrated the work of Interfaith Conference, as well as the people and groups that are making a tangible difference in our communities. Rev. Hurmon Hamilton gave the keynote address to encourage us to Dream Crazy Big! Rev. Hamilton, who served the Roxbury Presbyterian Church and helped found the Boston Interfaith Network, challenged us to work together to accomplish amazing things in Wisconsin.

He ended, however, by talking about swimming. Rev. Hamilton explained that we need to put our heads in the water in our fight for justice and compassion, but we also need to come up for air. Then we repeat the cycle: head in the water, up for air, head in the water, up for air. He was urging us to find our rhythm in ministry.

We can't swim endlessly without taking a breath. We'll be exhausted and desperate to drag ourselves out of the pool altogether. We can't swim faster and faster, hoping for tiny pockets of air to sustain us, which is my failed approach. We need to find our rhythm. Head in the water, up for air.

Rev. Hamilton's analogy was another iteration of the message shared by Jeremy Bryan at the last Presbytery Gathering, as he spoke about the importance of Sabbath. Jeremy urged us to root ourselves in prayer and reading of Scripture ... to seek the roots before the fruits.

As we dive into Advent, let us remember always to inhale the sustaining Breath of Life just as often as we put our heads in the water. Our health and ministries depend on this holy rhythm.