

Comments upon receiving the Ron McDaniel Award at the TMM Annual Awards Dinner June 9, 2016:

I want to thank Tulsa Metropolitan Ministry for this award tonight. It is with a deep sense of gratitude that I stand before you - my immediate family, my Church and work family, many friends, and the TMM family to accept this recognition.

From the beginning of my religious roots growing up in a Disciples of Christ congregation in Tulsa, being a member of College Hill Presbyterian Church for most of my adult life, and having the honor to work in both secular and religious settings with various faith traditions, I recognize that faith and religious belief can have a profound impact on one's life. I have always felt a calling to be a part of the religious fabric of our community and have derived much strength and fortitude from that engagement.

In my religious tradition, the words of Micah say it best: "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God".

Part of TMM's mission is to build relationships with and between faith communities and organizations. In my work, I see the strength of various faith communities working together **and** with secular institutions to do God's work in our community. In my view, God's work is reflected best when it involves activities that promote social justice and works to better the lives of those who are the most vulnerable, "the least of these".

And there is so much to be done...as our community continues to do less for those who have the least: less education for those who need it the most, less childcare help for families struggling to work full-time, less wage support for families struggling to be self-sufficient, less help for families who are caring for those who have a disability, less healthcare for those whose lives are impacted with chronic health conditions, less time in school for those who depend on that institution to meet their basic food needs...and even though we become burdened with the enormity of this list...it is nothing compared to the burdens that we place on struggling families trying to survive.

Some say that religious institutions and private philanthropy must step up and fill in the gaps created by governmental policies which leave the most vulnerable at risk. I say that our faith communities must rise up and help change the conversation so that our political institutions and policies reflect the best of our community values and not those of greed and indifference.

It is so important today that there are organizations like TMM that focus on working together for the greater good in our community. We all know that when the various faith traditions work together, great things are possible.

Thank you again for this recognition, and may we all continue to be blessed by the incredible work of the faith community in Tulsa from which we derive our strength and vision.