

Pastor Report February 2021

Greetings Friends! Who would have thought that our community could remain vibrant and engaged when we haven't seen one another in nearly a year? God continues to work in, through and among us - as Paul says "faith, hope and love abide, and the greatest of these is love (1 Cor 13:13). Love, God's love and our love for one another, keeps us rooted and relevant.

A few updates:

Continuing to find ways to engage both on Sunday mornings and throughout the week, following COVID restrictions, has required creativity and flexibility. Our Sunday morning Zoom worship attendance continues to average 45-49 screens, with regular attenders from 4 states within the US and 3 additional countries. Enlarging our global footprint has been one of the life giving surprises of the past several months. In worship, we have made a priority to include voices from around the globe.

Advent materials were sent to households, and daily devotionals were made available in order for us to remain connected through daily practices in our homes.

Special services, such as Christmas Eve, and Ash Wednesday, have been well attended, again bringing some sense of connection and structure to the seasons of the church year.

Earlier this winter, weather permitting, I met with congregants for walks, cups of tea on the patio, and visits around the fire pit, as well as on Zoom and by phone. I plan on resuming when the weather eases. I continue to provide communal support for the congregation through Wednesday sharing and prayer - another connection point for a core group.

I continue to be involved with local clergy groups, AMC pastor peer groups and attend Campus and Community in Unity meetings, sitting on the Policy and Advocacy Committee as a way of partnering and engaging in our local State College community.

I am currently taking a 6 week course through Fuller Seminary's De Pree Center for Leadership entitled "Tempered Resilience for Leading Change". This has been a helpful lens through which to consider what's needed as we move into yet another new way of being post COVID. Several on the Leadership Team will join me for a workshop through Fuller's De Pree Center on the "Future Church Summit" later this month.

We have begun to consider what worship will look like in the coming months as more and more of us are vaccinated and feel that we can gather with reduced risk. What a hybrid way of being together will look like is an ongoing discussion, involving collaborating with local clergy on best practices and technology to use.

As always, I welcome hearing from you - how to be present with you, in the joys and sorrows of day to day living. I welcome learning how to support your walk with Christ; how to support you as you live into the reality of a world of brokenness and what is asked of us. I walk with you, my brothers and sisters, Siblings in Christ. I hold the questions and sometimes live into the answers, seeking to love God and love neighbor.

May we continue the journey together, knowing Emmanuel, God walks with us.