

Pastor Report: May 2021

Church life has continued to be a source of learning, personal spiritual growth and an opportunity to serve the risen Christ. I am grateful for the UMC community and ways we're grown during these present COVID times. The Spirit of God continues to move in our midst - I see signs of it all the time. I pray you do as well.

As the COVID landscape continues to change, we plan to stay on Zoom until numbers in the State College area remain high. Discussions around outdoor worship and hybrid in the sanctuary worship continue to take shape.

Wednesday sharing and prayer time continues to be a vibrant place to explore scripture as well as share deeply from our lives.

Visiting with others continues to happen, less so over the winter, now picking up as the weather warms and more of us are vaccinated. I continue to look for ways to remain connected and available with the congregation.

Working with the Sunday school committee to plan zoom offerings has resulted in a variety of programs. Our anti-racism series will finish in mid-June, followed by 2 Sundays presenting Church Around the Table (CATT) to the congregation. Per our usual schedule, no SS will be offered during the summer months.

Have you stopped by the church to see the raised beds lately? New fencing is up, veggies are sprouting and work continues as we continue to partner with the 6 Guatemalan families. Mary Derstine and Sara Soto-Albrecht are helping lead that project now.

I continue to prioritize local engagement with our community - building relationships through participation in CCU (Campus and Community in Unity) and a weekly subgroup of policy and advocacy that works on anti-bias issues in our community. In January and April I worked with other local pastors to plan and implement 2 peace vigils when State College experienced hate-group activity.

I participated in a 6 week series through Fuller Seminary in late Winter on Leadership Resilience, as well as a weekend workshop "Future Church Summit". I hope to engage in more continuing education programming this summer.

The Elders and I are hoping to launch an experimental Church Around the Table (CATT) program later this summer as part of worship - I'm excited to explore ways to be vibrant and relevant as we continue to grow in relationship with one another and Christ.

As part of my 3 year review process, I have again asked the Leadership Team to do work around visioning. We started this process right before COVID, and are returning to it in a new way, as we consider what unique gifts UMC brings to our community and our world as we re-emerge from COVID. It's a great time to do a deep dive into what Christ is calling us to in this time and place. I encourage you to join us in discussions that will come in the months ahead.

I pray for each of you, am grateful for each of you and welcome each of you to let me know how to continue to walk this journey of life together.

In Christ,
Kate