

Pastor's report November 2023

Below are updates surrounding my work at UMC. September marked my 5th anniversary here. I am blessed to continue to provide pastoral leadership to this community. I have been remiss in creating quarterly reports, and so this one encompasses the past year. As always, I welcome finding ways to connect with each of you. Visiting, learning about your lives, supporting, rejoicing, as well as holding space for uncertainty and grief all add depth to our living out the call to be followers of Christ. I love visits, in any shape or form! I also welcome hearing your feedback. That's how I learn how to better pastor - what's been supportive? What do you long for? How can I support you on this journey of life and faith?

Thank you for your support that comes in so many ways. I look forward to continuing to serve together, finding ways to be the hands and feet of Christ here, now.

In Christ,

Kate

Updates:

1. Worship: While we didn't have an active Worship committee in 2022-2023, we gathered all involved for planning sessions around the various themes for that year, and have continued with that effective and satisfying practice. We did the following series: Acts; Practicing Resurrection; Lent (Seeking: Honest questions for a deeper faith); Romans 12; Advent (Women of Advent); Cairns and parables; as well as 5 Sundays of Church Around the Table (CATT).. Numbers of attendees in the sanctuary for the year through 11/5 averages about 52 persons, with a high of 87 on Easter Sunday; zoom averages 14 screens each week.
2. Worship committee has resumed as of September 2023. Our work so far includes choosing Advent materials, assessing CATT and making plans for new ways of engaging for CATT 2024, and much more!
3. Work with the Adult Christian education committee - planning and preparing to experiment with offering Christian education every week beginning in December.
4. Work with the Children and Youth committee. Sunday school will resume this December, with one multi-age class for ages pre-K through 6th grade. Worked with this group, in conjunction with the Meeting House committee to create the Family Nook in the back of the sanctuary.
5. Working with the elders and Leadership team - the visioning process is about to begin - this has been almost a year long process to get to this point.
6. Support of community through visitation - I continue to reach out regularly, trying to find ways to connect by taking walks, sharing meals, meeting on zoom, visiting in homes as well as phone check-ins. Being available as a spiritual support as we walk this journey of life continues to be a high priority of my ministry at UMC.
7. Funeral - worked with Paulette McLane's family (and Leah Witzig) to create a memorial service for not only Paulette, but Rogers as well.
8. Creation Care committee - support the work to bring our solar project to fruition as well as sharing that process with other congregations. Now considering phase 2, installing heat pumps.
9. New members - what a delight to welcome Carmen Groff, Tim Groff and Leslie Webb formally into our congregation. They have all participated in a study of Anabaptist beliefs and classes regarding membership. Ruth Kitchin Tillman transferred her membership from Hyattsville Mennonite.
10. Baby dedications - blessed Anika Saxena, Vera Derstine and Eliana Minnich and their families as part of our community, committing to supporting children and families in their life-faith journey.

11. Supporting the State College Interfaith (SCI) group by participating on the steering committee in welcoming the Jalali family, and then Storai's mother. The group is currently discerning next steps.
12. Mid-week News continues to be a regular way to share news and offer a midweek connection.
13. Tuesday sharing and prayer continues to be a group that shares deeply from our lives and engages in a lectio divina style of engaging scripture.
14. Community involvement - Community Oversight Board (COB) member; attend monthly Campus and Community in Unity (CCU) meetings. Attend local Interfaith clergy gatherings. Work with Interfaith Power and Light (IPL) encouraging church members to volunteer together. Organized the current Monday evening Lights for Peace silent vigil held downtown.
15. Allegheny Mennonite Conference involvement: Sit on the credentialing committee and was recently appointed to the Search committee formed to replace conference minister Dave Mishler. Attended Summer Gathering as well as bi-monthly pastor/peer gatherings.
16. Sabbatical. This was new this year, with 1 week of continuing education (CE) and 3 weeks of sabbatical. I met twice with a 3 person team (Tim Derstine, Bethany Spicher Schonberg and Krista Weidner) ahead of time to discern sabbatical plans. The CE week was spent in Wisconsin as part of the Eccumenical Center for Clergy Spiritual Renewal program. 2 weeks were spent in El Paso TX working on the border with Annunciation House, providing safe housing for those seeking refuge in the U.S.. Traveling to and from WI and TX, along with a few days of breathing space in State College made for a quick month away! I am beginning to explore what a sabbatical this year will look like.
17. Continuing education -
 - Participate in Spiritual Direction on a regular (nearly monthly) basis.
 - Attended Laurelville Pastor Study retreat in April 2023.
 - 4 day silent retreat in October 2023 along with occasional retreat days throughout the year.
 - Monthly meeting with pastors from the Eccumenical Center for Clergy Spiritual Renewal program
 - 8 month program through Eastern Mennonite Seminary: Seminar in Family and Congregational Systems.