

Pastor's Report
November 2020
Rev. Jessica Margrave Schirm

From the Christian Calendar perspective this year is coming to a close...but alas we still have six more weeks of 2020 to endure. Advent is one week away and, as I mentioned in my sermon this Sunday, this might be the Adventiest Advent we've ever Advented. It surely does feel like the darkness will overcome us. But it won't. We know it won't. We believe it won't. So we wait for the Light to be born with Hope, Peace, Joy and Love.

Staff Updates

As noted in a recent Tuesday's Together email, our Building Maintenance Custodian Bill Schulte has resigned his position to take another job that is a better fit for his needs right now. His last day will be 11/30/2020. At the time of Bill's hire we had two outstanding candidates for the position so when I learned that Bill had submitted his notice I reached out to the other candidate who initially expressed interest in taking the job. But then followed up with me noting that he did not think he could physically handle the responsibilities as he has a chronic back injury. Elizabeth and I, in consultation with the preschool have decided to handle the custodial tasks for our building as a staff for the month of December and then in January we will begin the search and hiring process for this position again. I will have an exit interview with Bill in the near future.

The Church Office remains closed, at least through Thanksgiving as cases of Covid 19 surge. Elizabeth is working from home, which hasn't been possible until now for technology reasons, and we will take it a week at a time going forward as to when it makes sense for our staff to work from the office again. Even though we are small staff and mask, if we can do our work from the safety of our homes, it makes sense to model that for our community at this time.

Pastoral Care/Worship/Ministry Updates

These last few weeks have been incredibly difficult for many members of our church family. From new cancer diagnoses, to new cancer treatments, to coming down with Covid-19 in immediate and extended families, folks are wearing and in need of prayer. I am doing the best I can to keep up and check in and our care connections team is doing the same.

Erin has been working hard to pull together some wonderful Advent surprises for our church family and I am hopeful that these have a positive effect on the spirits of our community. I am eager to receive and process and pray over the feedback we receive during the feedback zoom on 11/22 and will write more in my next report about how we are using that information for future planning.

Wider Ministerial/Denomination/Continuing Education Updates

I'm grateful for the continued guidance of our state wide UCC leadership who have requested that churches not even consider meeting in person until the end of January and maybe longer. You can find that guidance here: https://vimeo.com/479133518?fbclid=IwAR0gedntASB48Rbl8BUZ26CSQi_tbUsndOP0i1t1PLzNbpvLTgR8DFaldrI At the Central Association Committee on Ministry meeting on 11/19, we put our association wide support behind this state wide recommendation. I am thankful for our church board for being cautious and mindful of the ways that keeping our church building closed keeps our community safe(r).

With Grace and Peace, Pastor Jessica