

Pastor's Report – August 27, 2024 - Douglas UCC Council

This report represents 6 weeks of ministry, including one week of vacation which I spent at the family cottage just north of GR with my three children and their families. Thanks for Mark Johnston for preaching, Ginny Mikita for leading communion and Linda Knieriemen covering pastoral care. I came back feeling refreshed. Thanks!

During these 6 weeks I created 6 Sundays of liturgy and 4 Sundays of preaching. (I asked Dan to preach on the Sunday of the New Members Class and then that was postponed.) I worked with Jeff Spangler on music for 4 of those Sundays and contributed to 6 Epistles. I collated the texts and themes for September's Sundays and handed them off to Julie, Jeff and Peter.

The Transition Team met twice. We continue to encourage reporting on the maps in the Friendship Hall.

We began the conversation about Systems and Structures. The reality is that in many ways you function as a Program-size church and in other ways as a Pastor-size church. Before you can move to formally being Program-size, it would make sense to entertain the question, "What is your why?" (phase 5 of the Interim process). If the answer is something about growth, then assessing the systems for efficiency as Program-size makes sense. If the current size is the right size, then the assessment is different. In either case, who you are, what size you are, and how you function, effects the kind of pastor you should be looking for. Your Transition Team is exploring ways to engage the whole congregation in the "What is your why?" question.

The conversation about Connections (phase 4) continues with visits to local churches, gathering information about ways to collaborate and not overlap programs.

The Team also is collating the information about the history of grants given, needs in the community, and other non-profits, and is asking about how to deepen those relationships.

Feast for the Soul in August considered the phase 4 topic of the interim process, Connections. The document is attached if you would like to answer the questions. The last Feast will be Sept 4 considering the topic for phase 5, What is your why? Please consider joining us for this important conversation. Many thanks to Jeremy Lund and others for the hearty soup suppers with all the fixings.

Congregation Care Team met to continue the conversation about best practices for being a caring congregation. Imagine an umbrella called Caring Ministries and underneath like raindrops falling, ministries like driving, meals, listening, grief care, crisis care, etc. (or a tree with branches each representing a different ministry), in which people can engage with using their gifts and strengths and skills or as they have need. They also are considering a Parish Nurse position, perhaps to share with another church. Watch for opportunities to engage.

I served by phone or in person 11 different parishioners with pastoral care and officiated at the memorial service in the Memorial Garden for the friends and family of Bruce Dybas.

I attended the July Michigan Conference Board Meeting held at DUCC, the Red Dock Poetry Reading, and the Block Party where I got dunked several times!

The New Members Class was postponed due to two of the four interested weren't available this summer. Will reschedule in October.

Date for Ministry Fair? Sept 22 (rain date Sept 29?)

October 6, World Wide Communion Sunday – invitation for DUCC folk to bake breads from their traditions

What am I forgetting to mention?

With Appreciation!

Jody