

Douglas Congregational United Church of Christ

Pastor's Report: January 19, 2021

Dear Church Council:

New Year: *"You crown the year with Your Goodness, and Your paths drip with abundance"* (Psalm 65:11). This is my first Pastor's Report for 2021. Though 2020 was one of the most challenging years in our church's 138 year history, there were still many things to be grateful for last year. I am looking forward with great hope to this coming year, as our congregants get vaccinated and we make plans for returning to the sanctuary.

Christmas Eve Service: Though our church building remains closed, our longstanding Christmas Eve tradition of the "Service of Lesson & Carols" continued with a beautiful online service which blended new elements with musical clips from past services. More than 650 watched the service online. I am grateful to our Director of Music, Peter Black, and to all our readers and singers.

Centering Prayer: I am grateful to all who took part in our weekly "Centering Prayer" sessions on Zoom during November and December. More than twenty people participated. We will start again next month during the season of Lent.

New Stephen Ministers: On Sunday, January 3, we officially welcomed four new Stephen Ministers to serve our church: Patricia Denner, Doug Sipsma, Demethrea Terrien, and Michael Valdez. I personally went to each of their homes to present them with a certificate and pin upon the completion of their 50 hours of training.

Freund Estate: In his will, church member, Myron Freund (who passed away on December 13), left all of his personal possessions to Douglas UCC. In the spring, we will hold an outdoor sale of these items in front of our church's Retreat House.

Congregational Meeting: A Congregational Meeting was held on Sunday, January 10 via Zoom. More than 50 church members were in attendance. Our Church Council moderator, Peter Mueller, updated the congregation on preparations for returning to the sanctuary, and our Financial Oversight Committee shared the new "Financial Procedures" handbook they have been working on. Also, I shared a "2020 Year-in-Review" appreciation video, thanking the congregation for their continued support. Thank you to Peter Mueller, Mary Fechtig, Bob Kenny, Will Gervais, Stan Greene, and Julie Ridl for all of their work on the meeting.

Online Services: Last year at this time, we had a little more than 500 subscribers to our YouTube channel. Today, we have more than 2,550 subscribers! Our worship videos on YouTube received more than 13,000 views just this past month alone! We are so grateful that our Progressive Christian message is reaching far and wide beyond our church walls.

In Addition: I attended the Stephen Ministry Supervision meeting on December 22 on Zoom...I was a guest on the Morning Grind Radio show on January 2...I officiated the wedding of church members, Eric Lejeune and Bryan Kemp, at the church on January 11...I attended the Pastoral Relations Committee meeting on Zoom on January 17...I officiated a memorial service for Warren Plantinga (father of church member, Nancy Plantinga) on January 19 in Illinois...I will be attending the UCC Grand West Association Planning Committee meeting on January 26 on Zoom.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pastor Sal

Rev. Salvatore Sapienza, Pastor