

PASTOR'S REPORT – Fall Congregational Meeting 2023

It is my honor and privilege to serve you and do ministry alongside you. I am deeply grateful for our Board, Deacons, and volunteers. We support one another and we get things done! We are making a difference in the world.

The last six months, for me, have really been influenced by my health. I was recovering from one surgery, then had heart failure, another hospitalization, and became pacemaker dependent. Both surgeries had post-surgical complications which slowed my recovery although many said I was recovering swiftly. At this point, things seem stable. I was well enough to travel for vacation and am now exercising with Silver Sneakers!

Due to my health, I took off the summer semester from working on my doctorate. I returned to school in September. After returning from our trip to Ireland, I picked up another class from another seminary that will run until January. So right now, I am taking two classes towards my doctorate.

I gave my notice to my other part-time job (20 hours) as Communications Co-ordinator with our denomination. To assist them while they find my replacement, I am continuing to give 5 hours per week to that job. Between school, that job, and my responsibilities with MCCK, I am able to manage things quite well.

Unfortunately, I was not able to be as active with Pride Interfaith Knox as previously, due to my health. Just this past week, I have reconnected and rejoined the co-chairs as we look at what is in store for this organization next year. Rev. Caedmon Grace was going to represent us at the Pride Interfaith Service, but he got COVID and was unable to participate. We did have literature at that event and our statement of welcome was shared in the service.

Our digital ministry continues to expand. Services are now available on YouTube in either the full version or just the readings and message. Rev. Caedmon is also posting regularly on the churches Facebook page and has now added Instagram. The Instagram posts include short video clips from Sunday. We are beginning to have people reach out to us through our Facebook page. Recently two young adults have reached out and had exchanges with Rev. Caedmon.

Towards the end of the summer, Lois, Steve, Caedmon and I engaged the Worship Design Studio's annual worship planning retreat. This takes one through all the liturgical calendar with ideas for each season. We have met multiple times to plan Advent/Christmas, Epiphany, and Lent/Easter.

In the last six months, I have led part of the Homosexuality and the Bible class, facilitated some of the Tuesday and Wednesday small groups, planned all but one worship service, and preached. We have been blessed to have Rev. Caedmon and Rev. Joan Saniuk preach both when I was ill and when I was on vacation. Recently I have been in The Laramie Project production at Maryville College which has been a wonderful opportunity to connect with students and faculty there who were not familiar with MCC. We were able to have information at a booth at the Marketplace prior to one of the performances.

Although we have not been successful in finding a Music Director or accompanist, I continue to pursue options and connections. We have and will continue to be blessed by our ability to sing with worship videos. This is because we are so blessed to have Steve and his AV Team volunteers who make it possible for us to have videos, livestream our services, and interact with our Zoom attendees. Thank you!

As your pastor I am available for pastoral counseling in-person, via Zoom, or by phone. If you need support, please call. Don't assume I'm too busy. If I can't talk then, I will let you know and we will set up a time. Our Digital Pastor and Deacons are also available to you.

Thank you, Deacons and Board, for all your work. Thank you, congregation, for supporting APATT, the Food Pantry, the denomination, and our congregation with your prayers, your volunteer time, and your financial contributions.

May 2024 see the expansion of our ministries and our presence in the local community and beyond.