

## **Pastor's Report**

### **April, 2021**

#### **Thoughts and Musings**

- With all of the pandemic changes and subsequent uncertainties, I was pleased with Holy Week worship. Worship Director Tyler Driggs found all the music we needed and sang it wonderfully. The two of us created an entirely new Good Friday service that was well received. Council person Staci Stought was instrumental in helping me find enough volunteers. Wesley Stought was able to make all the different slide shows. Church Administrator Linda Thompson was able to keep all of it straight as we prepared, made bulletins, announcements and such. It was a great team effort. The many smaller alterations to what we “normally” do went off well, too.
- In person worship attendance continues to increase and online worship remains strong. In person worship is not gaining as fast as I would like, but at a rate that matches what our sister churches are experiencing. Major obstacles continue to be in our way to improve in person worship attendance. Primarily, the pandemic continues to rage. Franklin County is near purple level again. Until pandemic subsides, even our vaccinated members will choose to stay home. For those who do attend, the pandemic restrictions take away from the experience of worship, cf. seating, communion, congregational singing, no fellowship, no organ. With these restrictions, many won't return simply because it doesn't feel right. Finally, going from three to two worship times with two distinct styles is a big ask. No one is worshipping the style they did at the times they did a year ago. I hope in the summer that the rate of spread in our county will have decreased significantly and that everyone who wants a vaccine will have had one. At that point, we can begin to talk about removing carefully some of our pandemic restrictions that affect the quality of our in person worship. A longer and frankly more difficult discussion will have to be had over worship times and styles that make sense with whatever Messiah looks like post pandemic.

- I was excited to welcome back the Children's Ministry. Children's Minister Dawn had ten children in attendance for the first Children's Church she put together Sunday April 11. We had a genuine crowd for the Bunny event, with about 75 children and their family that came. We will be opening up our nursery, soon, too. It will be wonderful to have children return to worship.
- Deacon Elaine continues to be a blessing for our congregation and for me personally. She works hard providing pastoral care for all of us at Messiah. In her wake, as I talk to people who have been sick or in crisis, she has been well received and appreciated. Her ministry that began as a short term fix until we called a new associate has become a valuable gift for our community.
- It was good to see the Praise Team last Sunday. I genuinely enjoy traditional hymns and contemporary hymns. I hadn't realized how much I missed the guitars and drums and until I heard them again. Especially pleasing to my ears is the return of Sarah Schatz playing rhythm guitar again. She is not only excellent, but it allows Wes Stought add to our songs with lead guitar.