

PASTOR'S REPORT to the CONSISTORY of RICHVILLE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

November 1st, 2021

I don't know about the rest of our congregation's leadership, but this last month has flown by for me. Between Fall activities in the schools and community, and the normal routines of this time of year for the church, I have found myself "up to my eyeballs" of late -largely in good ways. Notably, last week, we had an unexpectedly overwhelming number of participants for Trunk-or-Treat (including unsolicited entertainment from a local horse-owner/DJ). We were blessed to interact with members and non-members (both returning and first-timers), and get folks on our mailing list, as well as pass-out literature about our church and enjoy fellowship with our guests -many of whom took special time to thank the staff and volunteers for the event.

We are now approaching the halfway mark for Stewardship Season. Time and Talents pledge cards went out with the newsletter last week and will appear in the bulletin until Consecration Sunday on November 21st. The Finance and Stewardship Committee has taken stock of the hard work the other teams have done to propose a budget for next year and we pray The LORD will continue to bless the faithfulness of our contributors. I'm grateful to our "guest" preachers (Jeff Dafler, Gary Bickel, and Bonnie Willis) for helping to make the season special with their sermons. We are also asking folks to participate with a "tally board" in the Fellowship Hall where we are writing down the gifts we've received from GOD and how we share them.

Additionally, I've begun preparations for Advent (which starts on November 28th). Our theme this year will be "Give It Time (Now and Not Yet)" and we'll be looking at how GOD's Kingdom started to manifest in fullness as soon as Christ was born, even as we await it's perfect consummation at his return. There will be seasonal devotionals for the adults, as well as ones for youth and families. Spiritual Life and I will need to continue looking at special music and the like, but have elected not to do anything to extravagant to kick-off the season. Christian Ed has selected a skit that should nicely accommodate our topic and one which we believe will work with the kids' strained and uncertain schedules (as it relates to organizing them for practices and so forth). Outreach is in the process of organizing and scheduling our assorted mission projects for this time of year as well.

Confirmation has now been meeting for a month (1 session with MaryJo and 1 with me) and they are aware of the program's requirements for this year. Already, they have begun submitting Community Service Hours and getting started on their Affirmations of Faith. I am currently looking for 2 adult members to serve as Mentors (1 for a girl and 1 for a boy). Please pray about this and see me if you are willing/being led to support our young people this way in their faith formation and ongoing development.

Worship remains in flux as people determine how they want to respond to Covid concerns, but slowly, our attendance is creeping back up. And, even amidst the difficulties of the pandemic, we still see new and returning worshippers (I am hoping to start a New Member Class sometime this month and we could, potentially, have around 6 people come to it).

Pastoral care needs have been lighter than usual lately, so my prayer is to do so more intentional, non-emergency visitation and so-forth in the next couple of weeks. Along with that, I will be taking the last of my 2021 vacation time the couple of days leading up to Thanksgiving (I am unsure right now of travel plans, if any). One final note of gratitude before I conclude: I am deeply thankful for all of those who have made it a point to welcome and accommodate some of our newest worshippers. It is vitally important that they are made to feel welcomed and folks have been going out of their way to ensure that nothing inhibits new people from being able to freely worship (regardless of ability, personhood, etc.). I've been blessed to see how many of our members (particularly those in leadership positions and serving with Christian Ed) have made it a point to "make space" for those The LORD has led to us.

Respectfully submitted...

All Peace, Love & Blessings; your brother & servant in Christ-Jesus,



Will Stuart (pastor)

PASTORAL CARE for OCTOBER **"By The Numbers"**

- Visits/Counseling Sessions: 18
- Communion (off-site): 3
- Hospital Visits: 4
- Nursing Home Visits: 7
- Weddings (non-member/regular attendees): 1