

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

### PASTORAL CARE for AUGUST

#### "By The Numbers"

- Visits/Counseling Sessions: 16
- Communion (off-site): 2
- Hospital Visits: 6
- Nursing Home Visits: 2

### September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022

We are now "back into the swing of things" for the regular program year and beginning to prepare for larger activities (such as Fall Festival, Trunk-or-Treat, Stewardship Season, and even Advent).

This, of course, means increased activity (especially among leadership -who is tasked with recruiting and organizing volunteers, setting-up individual events, overseeing expenditures, and the like). Consequently, it is important for all of us to be praying with and for one another, and making sure nobody is burning-out and everyone is staying well.

Amidst the normal routines of this time of year, we've had the added frenzy of our assorted maintenance and improvement projects (tree removal, parking lot repairs, kitchen upgrade, sanctuary sound and video issues). In these areas, we have seen a lot of progress (thanks to the generous donations and faithful hard work of our members and a dedicated group of volunteers/elected officers). We still have a way to go on a couple of these fronts, but we are seeing movement.

In addition to these areas of special importance, we are trying to get Spiritual Formation/Christian Education back on track. Ruth's Sunday School class has resumed and Wednesday Night Bible Study (after a brief, couple of week hiatus during the Summer) has started up again -with a new, 10 week series (led by Jeff Dafler) kicking-off on 9/14/22. Gary Bickel continues to do his best to rally our young people and offer opportunities for fun, fellowship, faith development, and service. Confirmation is still a bit of a question mark for this year (at present, I have only 1 child committed, with a couple more eligible). I will be conferring with the family/families in question soon in order to determine how to proceed.

Regarding more immediate and short-term ministry, I will be working with Gary Bickel to recruit our youth/young adults to help with Fall Festival -most notably serving and assisting with setup/tear-down of the rummage sale (the Outreach Committee is having some difficulty finding volunteers who are free/able-bodied enough). We have procured and installed two new microphones in the sanctuary and have brought Jamie Jansen back in to troubleshoot some of the technology hiccups we've faced (most of which revolve around software issues). Bonnie Willis has recently started helping out even more with visitation, and we're discussing Called 2 Care, as well as getting ready for Annual Evaluations, Employee Handbook, and so forth (per her other role as Pastor/Parish chairperson). While we tabled them last month, I do want to continue our conversations about an "Open and Affirming" statement and planning another Leadership Retreat (after the first of the year?). This would ideally address the more practical dimensions of our Fall Theme: **"Priceless Treasures: 3M<sup>(x2)</sup>: Ministry, Mission, and the Miraculous (Money, Manpower, and Management)**. Here, also, I am asking for folks willing to do videotaped interviews for Stewardship Season (similar to the "Witnessing Stewards" we've done in worship and the online clips we've shared previously).

Worship remains lighter-in-attendance than prior to the pandemic. The numbers fluctuate by 10 to 20 per any given week (with a rotation of weekly regulars and those who come a couple times, faithfully, each month). Presently, we have seemed to have hit a bit of a plateau (only getting above 70 once, not counting Christmas or Easter, since resuming in-person services). Additionally, over the last month or two, we have seen a decline in youth participation (which, often, has a lot to do with sports/extracurriculars at the beginning of the school year).

My pastoral care has been pretty steady, but not overwhelming. We have experienced a number of (particularly older members) wrestling with injuries, hospitalizations, and chronic health concerns. Fortunately, even among our homebound, most are staying connected via online worship/cards/calls/visits and occasional participation in events such as Golden Charms.

I thank you all for your dedication and pray that our current theme, efforts, and long-range planning will continue to keep Richville stable and propel us to thrive in the future!

**Respectfully submitted...**

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



**Will Stuart** (pastor)