

Dear Church Family,

I started out writing this report making a list of the things our church has done and been a part of over the course of this year and realized quickly that there would not be enough room on one page to name them all. We are an active and vibrant faith community. That fact is not a new one, but rather has been reinforced throughout this year as we continue to find ways to be faithful to our mission of outreach, music, and spiritual growth. We are a church that is not confined to the physical building in which we worship, but are always extending our love and care into our community in many ways.

We are a resilient church, adapting to the changes around us while holding our faith at the core of who we are. That resilience was most obvious when at the beginning of the year we returned to recorded worship and “hymns at home” as pandemic cases rose and we felt it the right thing to do for the safety of all. By March we were back to in-person worship in our sanctuary and on several occasions throughout the summer, we held services on the lawn near our lovely Meditation Garden that were well attended and enjoyed by everyone.

It is a blessing to be able to move through the flow of life, adapting as we can while remaining true to our commitment to love and serve wherever, whenever, and however we are able. That was true as we reached out to neighbors near and far throughout the year offering the support we could provide. It was also true as we sought to learn about our indigenous neighbors and work to bridge the gap that divides many of us from one another as we learn from each other and grow in acceptance and understanding.

Our church is about building community. Together we bring our differences of opinion, our personal beliefs, a variety of backgrounds and traditions, our individual selves that are unique and wonderful. Together we strive to value each person, to join together on those things we share in common, respect our differences and aim to learn from one another that our lives might be fuller and richer for having done so. That is what being community is. In a world where differences divide, who we are as a faith community that welcomes all is vitally important toward building a better world.

There is no doubt that these times in our history as a country and a world are wrought with great challenge. Yet, there is also no doubt that times such as these require strength within, a spiritual strength that is nurtured by community sharing our ups and downs together.

As we begin a new year in the life of our church, I invite you to join with me in considering how we can remain a vital presence in our community. How might that take us beyond worship in ways that connect us with others through mission and music and play? How might our faith show up in ways that cherish the natural world and work to protect it? How might our faith lead us to create opportunities for deeper relationships with our neighbors? Come, imagine with me as we journey together celebrating all that we are and who we can become.

In faith,

Doretta