



## JUNE 2023 PRESIDENT'S LETTER

### KEEPING COMPANY

I was not able to attend in person worship during part of my recovery from foot surgery last year. I worshipped online for those Sundays and the service was beautiful and meaningful even at home.

We've all experienced this to some extent especially during the phases of the pandemic when we were unable to gather in person. I missed my faith community, and as I reflect on that time, I remember exactly what I missed the most.

I missed the way that in person worship opened my senses, especially the songs, prayers, and responses. I missed the touch during the sharing of the peace. I missed the special connection with other people that happens during the worship service. I missed the spontaneous unexpected conversations that happen in the narthex, hallway, parking lot, and fellowship hall. Mostly, I missed the people. How was my friend doing after her surgery? Did my other friend get the new puppy they were talking about when I last saw them? Do we have enough craft supplies for the upcoming event? Some of this was handled by phone and email, but it wasn't the same as talking in person.

Keeping company is part of the reason we worship. We need to be in company with God and with each other. We need to worship God and value God above other things. We experience worship to give our lives meaning. We are in a space where we build community. Worship is not confined to our church buildings; we learned a lot about this during the pandemic. We worship whenever we put God first in our lives. We seek to know God in our own unique way.

Keeping company with God and each other can help us heal, support us during challenging times, and keep us connected to a community greater than ourselves. The theme IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL that we are exploring as the Christian Education Network this year is very timely. Everyone I know is recovering from something. It might be a major trauma, an illness or surgery, the loss of a loved one, a life transition, some unexpected news that disrupts life. When I retired from my call last year, I was amazed to discover several colleagues who were retiring because of one of these reasons.

Keeping company and being in relationships, however and whenever we live that out, is a form of worship. We are looking for someone or something to give our lives meaning. We become something new and are transformed through these relationships with God and with each other. And all these transformations together in our communities of faith can provide healing in a powerful way.

Diane McGeoch, Deacon (Retired but still transforming)

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*"...that they may be encouraged  
in heart and united in love..."*

Colossians 2.2 (NIV)