



January 2021

Dear friends,

Last weekend I was able to participate in a two-day event sponsored by our Synod. The keynote speaker, Pastor Michael Adam Beck, challenged us to look at ministry outside of our current building. Based on the Fresh Expression movement, Pastor Beck shared some very non-traditional worship communities.

He began with Burritos and Bibles – a gathering at a Mexican restaurant to talk about life and check out the Bible, that grew into a second location and sharing together the Lord's Supper.

Another community is based at a dog park. A gentleman had met people while watching their dogs play. He invited a few to gather for a few minutes of prayer the following week. Now, there are 2-3 dozen humans who talk about a "Jesus story" and pray while their dogs run and play.

Still other communities gather at a tattoo parlor and online yoga. Living Room Church is now a weekly Facebook offering.

This month our Congregational Council will be looking ahead at 2021 and how worship will adapt throughout the COVID-19 season. One of the resources we will be using is *The Scattering: Imagining a Church that Connects Faith and Life* by Dwight L. DuBois and Craig L. Nesson. Imagine if your faith community carried their faith out into the community each week. That is the challenge in this time when we cannot gather as we would like. How do we continue to grow disciples in non-traditional ways? What can we prune from our "always done it this way" repertoire? What new ways might we engage people? And here is the greatest challenge – how might we work together with other parishes, lifting up everyone's gifts and sharing in the ministry?

When my daughters were in elementary school, I would pick them up each afternoon. Before we got home, they each had to share three good things about the day. Then we could talk about the other stuff. I have a dear friend who, every night, posts three blessings on Facebook. What if we spent this month, not only preparing for Lent, but counting the blessings that have come this past year?

My friends, I know we are all weary from adapting and pivoting. But, let me encourage you, look for the blessings. Take time to stop and give thanks. Celebrate in whatever ways you are able right now. And together, let's look ahead to where the Spirit is leading and the Savior is calling.

Peace and Blessings,

The Rev. Juli Lejman-Guy, President

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*"...that they may be  
encouraged in heart*