

## 2020-2021 Annual Report

Colin Walker, Congregational President

Flexibility. Five syllables that hold so much meaning, particularly as we find ourselves in what seems like a constant state of flux. Some of you probably know that one of my first jobs was at Kelsey Creek Farm. This historic working farm in the Wilburton neighborhood had a variety of animals – sheep, goats, chickens, ducks, cows, and ponies, among others – and herding *chickens* was an almost daily occurrence.

Working on a farm requires, no, *demand*s flexibility. You can have the perfect plan for the day, an immaculate checklist of chores to complete, but if the horse gets out, you have to drop everything and chase after him. Eventually, once Smokey is secured back in his pasture, you can continue with your checklist.

The ongoing pandemic has certainly provided its fair share of horses escaping the pasture, needing to be chased across the hillside. When I began my term as Congregational President almost two years ago, a nice checklist was waiting for Council: roof trusses were about to be installed, discussions about the best use of our property were underway, and we had a sense of purpose and urgency as we discussed how we could be more missional in our approach to serving the Crossroads neighborhood.

In the months leading up to last year's Annual Meeting, we had begun learning how to use Zoom as a congregation, we were learning how to shift worship from live-in-the-Sanctuary to streamed-via-YouTube, and most importantly, learning how to stay connected as a congregation in a time of great uncertainty. And you know what? We did a pretty incredible job.

Recently, you were asked to provide input into our re-opening planning process through a congregational survey. In the survey, we learned that most of you are feeling at least adequately connected to the church, and to each other. We certainly look forward to our return to in-person worship, fellowship, and service, but we learned that we can do

this. From the many activities planned and coordinated by our amazing staff – Zoom Happy Hour, Book Club, PACK, the Easter worship bags, and others – to our weekly online worship services, we've stayed connected and together.

In the coming months, we look forward to our return to in-person worship. Last weekend, we had the opportunity to worship together, in person, for the first time in fifteen months. It's important to remember, though, that even though we will continue increasing our opportunities to worship and gather in person, there are still those who are unable to be there in person. Because of this, we are committed to continuing an online worship presence moving forward.

I'd like to thank *all* of you for your continued patience and flexibility as we adapt to changing policies, procedures, guidelines, and our evolving understanding of the science behind the pandemic. I would also like to thank Kristie, Annie, Aria, and Asher for their patience and for giving up their time with me over the past fifteen months as I've spent more time on church work than any of us ever imagined.

I hope to see many of you in the coming months!

Colin