

Pastor's report to the Charge Conference/6 November 2021

Having attempted and failed to produce a report electronically, I offer this substitute:

The year has been a mixture of joy and frustration, as Bethesda paid its bills, held its mix of virtual and in-person worship services, and provided the ministries its imagination and practical effort were able to complete.

We donate books and magazines to the Baltimore City jail; provide food and volunteer service to the Food Pantry @ nearby Faith Community UM Church, and donate food and money to Manna House and Christ Church for the Deaf, and money for a ministry of utilities support (gas and electric, water, etc) through the Harford Ministerium administered by St. Francis Roman Catholic Church; we correspond with missionaries through the Global Ministries Prayer Calendar produced by the Women's Division of the Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church. We support, meet with, and reach out through the Baltimore-Washington Conference's Reconciling Ministries, march in the annual Pride Parade, and otherwise contribute to the welcome and welfare of the LGBTQ community both locally and worldwide. We host a day care and another congregation, thereby gaining funds for our own ministries and sheltering space for these institutions. A new program, FOCUS, uses part of our undercroft for weekly classes on the repair and use of computers. Several self-help groups (Alcoholics Anonymous, Alanon) share space for regular meetings in our basement areas. Both our 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. Sunday services have been shared virtually by phone throughout the year, and the 8:30 service has resumed in-person worship since late spring, the 10:30 since mid-summer. This Sunday, 7 November, our annual fund-raising event to raise money for missions will follow the 10:30 service. Various individuals and families have received donations on occasion, and our six annual United Methodist collections have been sent to the appropriate agencies.

We tried a weekly Bible study, using the Upper Room guide to the lectionary, but gave up due to small attendance after several weeks. No other Bible Study or Sunday School programs have been held this year.

I have presented numerous examples of ministry via our website, and relevant news articles from a broad range of sources are published under the "news" rubric. My sermons are also carried on the website, as are the weekly worship services. Bulletins are mailed to shut-in's and those who tune in via conference call.

I hope soon to resume the conference call option for both services shortly, provided a volunteer is found to administer the program we've purchased from the national church.

I am a police chaplain with the Northeast District, and we were recently blessed with a visit to our 10:30 service by an officer, for the first time in many years. We have an Outreach Coordinator, Ben Dorsey, who often accompanies me to programs at the Interfaith Center for Islamic, Christian, and Jewish studies and other educational and faith-based events.

We have just voted to govern by the “One Church” model, encouraged and supported by our District Superintendent. I hope this will lead to regular monthly meetings, brief but wide-ranging, in the new year. I feel very strongly that Bethesda has much potential for imaginative and fruitful discipleship still to launch, and am honored to accompany them on their discipleship pathway.

Gratefully,

Arthur Dan Gleckler, pastor
7 November 2021