



St. Matthews By-the-Sea
Fenwick Island, DE

February 2021
Vol. 2 Issue 1

The Opposite of a Dumpster Fire



systemic racism is insinuated in nearly all of our society's institutions and practices, seeing the future erosion of civility and commitment to the common good; and fearing for the survival of democracy itself.

There were also, as there always are, personal challenges. All of us, including the apparently untroubled, are

dealing with things that threaten our well-being, our ability to cope, and our capacity for hope. I know mine. You know yours. We know some of one another's.

There's nothing magical or automatic about a New Year. Many of the conditions which made 2020 such a struggle are still with us, both individually and collectively. Any newness we might experience depends, in part, on what we do.

We need to lament the losses, grieve the deaths and protest the injustices we're experiencing—to say to God and to one another that it's wrong and too much.

To push-through hard things, some of us have minimized or denied them, but newness is on the other side of our unflinchingly facing the brutal realities. Letting ourselves feel deeply our hurt, express it honestly, and weep over it unashamedly open us to mercy for healing, energy for endurance, and resources for resilience.

Dr. Guy Sayles is the former pastor of First Baptist Church in Asheville, NC. Following a diagnosis of an incurable disease, he retired from that role and now serves as a writer, speaker, consultant, and coach who focuses on the intersection of meaning and culture. He is engaged in exploration of the practices and perspectives that contribute to ethical and effective leadership, purposeful and empowering organizations, and healing and reconciling spirituality.

We need to reaffirm our mutuality and vulnerability—to acknowledge with our words and in our actions that we need and affect one another. Over the last year, I've been amazed at the quiet heroism of medical caregivers, first responders, nonprofit providers of emergency help, essential workers, neighbors looking-out for neighbors, and many others.

I've also been astonished at the recklessness of people who are willing, not only to risk their own health, but to put those around them at risk. That recklessness, comprised of a politicized denial of facts and a superficial assertion of "rights", is dangerous.

The interlocking crisis of our time make it unmistakably clear that what we do either enhances or diminishes the common good on which all individual good depends. Public health, economic vitality, equal opportunity, civil liberties, environmental sustainability, and restorative justice depend on our respecting, listening to, understanding, valuing

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What's the opposite of a dumpster fire? Of doom-scrolling? Of trolling?

What would the best-year-ever be like?

Long ago, I drove away from a town in which I'd experienced a lot of pain. As I crossed the city limits and, a few minutes later, the county line, I looked into the rearview mirror to catch the last glimpse of the 'Welcome to...' sign. I said to myself, "I hope never to be back here." I feel the same way about 2020.

Whether or not it was actually the worst year in all of human history is open to debate. It's even an open question about how it compares to other very difficult years in American history. Hands down though, it's the worst year of my lifetime (though 1968 is a contender for that title.)

In 2020, we shared hard things in common; grieving the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people to the coronavirus, enduring economic fractures; witnessing, yet again, how



A Moment with Pastor Mike

Alexia. What Month is It?

Saint Matthews-by-the-Sea Vision & Mission Statement

Our Vision: *"To be a loving community that supports all people in finding new life in Christ."*

Our Mission: *"To offer our service, facility, and church programs to meet the needs of our Community and beyond so that lives are transformed to the glory of God."*

I was thinking about getting something accomplished one recent afternoon and the thought came to me, "I'm running out of time!" Then I looked at my watch and saw it was only 10:30 am. If only it was that easy to gain a few hours. Actually, my watch battery needed a charge. It led me to ask, "Why do things happen when we don't have time for them?"

Then I thought, ... Hey! Ok. It's been a little crazy! Still, it's a brand new year! (I think!? ... Jan, Feb, ?) I just need to Recalculate! Start again! In one of Ann Hurley's favorite movies, Ann of Green Gables always said, "It's a new day with no mistakes in it!" Of course, that led me to wonder, "How will this new year play out?" I believe, the possibilities are endless.

There's something exciting about new beginnings; the blessing of a newborn

baby, the flowers that spring forth in the promise of Spring, the eternal hope of two lovers on their wedding day. We have all seen it, even experienced it! What a wonderful feeling. And that is the feeling I want us to have as we engage every new adventure God brings to us.

Over the years Saint Matthews-by-the-Sea UMC has been faithfully responding to God's call by becoming a blessing in this community and beyond. A quality decision to plant the church on this land was made by the congregation. A statement "of purpose" was made to define the people of SMBTS.

#1: We invite everyone to come and experience new life in Christ.

#2: We pledge to use everything we have to see those lives transformed to the glory of God!

I'm excited that this decision came from your desire to be God's faithful children. I am thrilled that as we travel together there will be many new opportunities to move forward in Jesus. And just like we have to care for the baby, weed the flowers, and work on the marriage, I'm sure we will all work to accomplish great things for the glory of God in this corner of our world.

Many Blessings,



1 Corinthians 15:58 *"Therefore, my dear brothers (and sisters), stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."*

On January 4, 2021, the new UMW Board met for their first Board Meeting of 2021. Anita Angeny was invited to do the installation of officers for the new year since the UMW did not meet in December of 2020.

The new officers are as follows:

President – Alice Ward

Vice President – Marilyn Wockley

Secretary – Janet Hess

Treasurer – Mary Brennan

Devotions Coordinator – Karen Black

Reading Program Coord – Rose Oruc

Membership/Nominations Coord –

A. Kaye Reese

It should also be noted that Doris Ann Pierce will be working with Marilyn Wockley in the preparation of our programs for the monthly meetings.

Each of us accepted the commitment of carrying out the Purpose of the United Methodist Women and accepted the commitment to our St. Matthews By-the-Sea UMW.

For those of you who are not aware of our purpose, I would like to share it with you.

"United Methodist Women shall be a com-

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Reverend Michael Hurley, Pastor

Glenn Pierce, Newsletter Editor

UMW

munity of women whose purpose is to know God and experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church."

Our first monthly UMW meeting was held in person at the church on January 12, 2021. Due to Covid restrictions we followed the same protocol we do when we enter the church on Sunday's. While we did not serve refreshments of food or drink I believe we served nourishment by the presenting of the Word of God, a time of meditation and worship, a Testimony, and our prayers. And, of course we did share some business updates!

We are thankful for all who helped serve at our Christmas Bazaar and with the Sales of the Wreath's. Those were our main fundraising events in 2020 which



proved to be very fruitful bounty and have allowed us to make generous donations to both local missions as well as the Global missions we support yearly.

Ladies, you will be receiving a letter in the mail in the next few weeks which outlines more of our vision for 2021 and information about St. Matthews By-the-Sea UMW. **Our next monthly meeting will be February 9, 2021 at 1:00 pm in the Sanctuary.** Mark your calendars! All women are invited! Come check out what God is doing!



**United
Methodist
Men**

Helping Men Grow in Christ, So Others May Know C

Seek and find fellowship, encouragement and opportunity with the UMM. You are invited to join us the first Saturday of each month for Breakfast, Brotherhood and Bibles. A pre-meeting breakfast & fellowship begins at 7:30 am to nourish the body. A program follows at 8:00 am to stimulate our minds, and each meeting is concluded with the spiritual renewal of a communion service, acknowledging a commitment discipline and focus as fundamental to the Christian experience. The meetings conclude promptly at 9:00 am.

The new officers for 2021 are:

<i>President:</i>	Phil Drew
<i>Vice President:</i>	Ron Nagers
<i>Secretary:</i>	Terry Wildermuth
<i>Treasurer:</i>	Dave Edwards

Our thanks to over 50 people who participated in the Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign this year. The Salvation



Army's Lt. Alban reports we raised **\$19,902.45** for the 2020 Christmas season which is more than twice what we accomplished in 2019. Thank you, thank you and thank you for all your help.

All future meeting are planned for face-to-face but in the event of cancellation we will revert to "virtual" call-in

meetings. Please look for bulletin announcements of our next UMM Bible Study lead by Bob Nickle. Our wish is that the Covid-19 virus will soon be behind us and we can worship in person again.

UMW WOMEN'S RETREAT

"80 Days on the Ark in 2020."

In 2020, God certainly gave us trials! A plague, isolation, fear, and grief. But hidden in those trials, He also gave us opportunities. Did we recognize the opportunities, or just the trials?"

We welcome all ladies from St Matthews (and guests) at our *UMW Women's Retreat – Friday, April 16 – Saturday, April 17, 2021*. To allow for covid-19 uncertainties, we will be holding our retreat at St. Matthews-By-the-Sea. The retreat will begin with a session from 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm on Friday, April 16(includes dinner). The Saturday sessions will begin (after breakfast) at 9:00 am and go until 7:00 pm (including lunch at church and dinner at a restaurant). There will be no Sunday session this year. We will take all covid-19 protections in regard to spacing, cleaning and masks that are in effect in April.

The cost of the retreat is \$100 per person. Applications will **not** be available at church this year. Please contact Mimi Drew (mimidrew@livingleadership.biz, (302) 381-1795) to have a retreat application sent to you or if you have questions. Your application should be returned immediately and the \$100 fee (made out to "SMBTS – UMW") is due not later than March 1st.

A Word from Our Lay Leader

Many thanks to our SMBTS members who are demonstrating concern, respect, support and love for each other.

I appreciate the discussions and efforts to keep our church family safe from a virus that has affected and taken many lives in our country and around the world. Thank you, ushers and volunteers for temperature taking, spraying hands, and confirming masking and safe distancing. I appreciate the wisdom and creativity expressed in the efforts to stay connected – who would have imagined a year ago hearing the church service over FM radio in the parking lot or watching the message from our pastor on youtube or Facebook or even our webpage?? And thanks to all the people connecting through calls, notes, and messaging.

From the Missions Committee thank you for continuing the financial support that allowed us to meet and exceed our commitments during a time of fear, financial stress and need related to this medical catastrophic event affecting us all. I pass on to you the appreciation and thanks expressed from our missionaries and many mission programs.

You have helped supply food and sup-

port through South East Sussex Ministerium to homeless in our community allowing SESM to distribute \$3400.00 through CROP to local food banks. You have made a difference in people's lives.

We are reminded that in this and any circumstance, we are loved and cared for as God's children and that in response love and caring should be extended to all. God has supplied all we need to sustain us and to allow us to provide for the care of our neighbors who may be suffering health, nutritional and financial needs during this difficult time. Most importantly we trust in God to provide what we need for the least of us. I believe most of us have had times in their lives when we have received help in some form when needed and not expected – responding with overwhelming joy and encouraging us to respond with gratitude in like manner to others.

May this faith and trust grow in our hearts .

Sandy Pierce, Lay Leader SMBTS

The Season of Lent

Lent is a solemn religious observance in the Christian liturgical calendar that begins on [Ash Wednesday](#), February 17th and ends approximately six weeks later, before Easter Sunday. The purpose of Lent is the preparation of the believer for Easter through prayer, doing penance, repentance of sins, almsgiving and self-denial

The last week of Lent is Holy Week, starting with Palm Sunday. Following the New Testament story, Jesus' crucifixion is commemorated on Good Friday, and at the beginning of the next week the joyful celebration of Easter Sunday recalls the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In Lent, many Christians commit to fasting, as well as giving up certain luxuries in order to replicate the account of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ's journey into the desert for 40 days; this is known as one's Lenten sacrifice.^[9] Many Christians also add a Lenten spiritual discipline, such as reading a daily devotional or praying through a Lenten calendar, to draw themselves near to God. The Stations of the Cross, a devotional commemoration of Christ's carrying the Cross and of his execution, are often observed. Many churches remove flowers from their altars, while crucifixes, religious statues, and other elaborate religious symbols are often veiled in violet fabrics in solemn observance of the event. Throughout Christendom, some adherents mark the season with the traditional abstinence from the consumption of meat.

Lent is traditionally described as lasting for 40 days, in commemoration of the 40 days Jesus spent fasting in the desert, according to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, before beginning his public ministry, during which he endured temptation by Satan.

In Memorium

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Eleanor Barnett</i> | <i>Bette Bates</i> |
| <i>Granville Cannon</i> | <i>Barbara Carol</i> |
| <i>Herb Chapman</i> | <i>Cary Clark</i> |
| <i>Lorraine Keck</i> | <i>Joyce Long</i> |
| <i>Joyce Murphy</i> | <i>Phyllis Nichols</i> |
| <i>Susan Rago</i> | <i>Allen Stetson</i> |



A Spiritual Decluttering:

A Fresh Start for a New Year

One of the wonderful things about each new year is that it brings with it a sense of a new beginning, 365 days of promise and possibility.

Some use this time to bring freshness to their lives. You may decide to declutter the junk drawer, attic, or garage. It may also mean removing many of the sugars, fats, and carbohydrates from [our diets](#).

As a United Methodist church member, parting with some things for a season, may help declutter your spiritual life. Doing so helps make room for a new movement of the Holy Spirit in the months to come.

What might you set aside in the next year?

Time-wasters

John Wesley instructed his pastors to "Never trifle away time" ([2016 Discipline](#) 330.5.d.19.a). Instead, they were to be engaged in the practice of ministry or the development of their spiritual lives. While we may not want to get rid of *all* time-wasters since we need times of rest, there are diversions we could remove and replace with something more beneficial.

Consider finding ways to free up time to make regular calls to old friends and church members you no longer see, to join a class or small group at your church, or when possible, volunteer at a local food bank or other mission.

A devotional

Devotionals are helpful aids to lead us in Scripture reading and prayer every day, but we can become stuck in a rut with them as well. If you have been using the same book or website for more than a year, you may benefit from trying something different this year. A new devotional resource, like an unfamiliar Bible translation, can bring new life to your

time with God.

There are many devotional helps available online and in physical and digital books. [The Upper Room](#) from Discipleship Ministries of The United Methodist Church, is a very good source. Try something new.

Negativity

Although we do not like to admit it, there are seasons when many of us fall into patterns of negativity. Discouraged by the news, the theology of others, policies of our denomination, and practices of our congregation can become sources of stress and fodder for complaining.

[Removing negativity](#) from our lives and choosing instead to find things to celebrate can lift your spirits and renew your passion for that which matters most. Find where

you see the love of Jesus in the world and celebrate it.

Obligatory church-stuff

Some of us do things in the church that bring us no joy. We're not really sure how we ever got the job. We don't really want it. Yet, we are pretty sure that if we don't do it, it won't get done. Those types of obligations often lead to church burnout.

After the New Year is underway, schedule a conversation with your pastor. Ask how you can step away from that obligation and into a new way of using your gifts to serve your church or community. That will be a blessing both to you and your congregation.

New possibilities

The New Year can be one of new experiences in your church and spiritual life. Make room in days ahead for the Holy Spirit to do a new work in you. Then see what happens.

A Different Version of the Bible

If you have been a Christian for a long time you probably know the Bible pretty well.

There are verses you know by heart and stories that are very familiar. Reading from a different version of the Bible can help bring new life to those passages. A translator's decision to use one word over another may give you some new insight you hadn't thought of before.

If you regularly read from a modern version like the Common English Bible, consider a more traditional translation like the New Revised Standard Version. If you lean toward the more traditional, try something more modern. Search the web for Bible readings sites and apps (there are many free ones).



St. Valentine's'



According to history books, the name originated from a Catholic priest, St. Valentine, who lived in the 3rd century. He was a kind-hearted Roman priest. He was martyred on or around that date on the 14th day of February in 270 CE.

During his priesthood, Emperor Claudius II banned marriages because he thought married men were a bad soldier. But he, St. Valentine defied the order and arranged marriages in secret, and this led to his arrest and sentence to death. He suffered a very painful death... was beheaded.

HOW DID VALENTINE DAY START?

There are various theories on how the Valentine Day came to be. Some of them include

While in prison, he fell in love with a jailer's daughter, and when he was being taken to be killed on the 14th February, he wrote a love letter to her and signed it "From your Valentine" and there, the name Valentine for the lover was born.

THE CAT'S MEOW

NO CATS?????

Two things are certain about stories in the bible: animals *were created by God and man was given dominion over them.*

There's also another interesting fact about animals in the bible. **Cats are not mentioned anywhere in it.** If you care to, you can find calves and camels, canker worms and cattle, cocks and colts, crickets and crocodiles, and even unicorns (yes, they are in there nine times!) but no cats.

Despite not being mentioned in the bible, cats appear to be prospering. Nevertheless, we have to wonder at their exclusion. **If** the bible is the inspired word of God--every jot or tittle of which is true--why was God not inspired to give cats a shout-out in his magnum opus?

After giving the matter brief but shallow thought, I came up with ten possible explanations for God's position on cats.

- God is not a cat person

- Cats don't come when they're called, so they missed the cruise on Noah's ark
- The bible was "written" by Jews, who hated Egyptians, who worshiped cats
- God isn't mentioned in the cats' bible
- Even God could not give man dominion over cats
- The bible was "written" by men
- Cats wanted script approval
- Ancient Jews considered cats the acceptable white meat
- Cats have nine lives, whereas God has only three

So to sum things up, God made cats but didn't give man dominion over them. And cats have been smart enough to take advantage of man all these millennium.

So there.

Sister Felicity Immaculata, Mother Superior of the Order of Eternal Indifference; sends you blessings from quarantine.



Virtual Santa

Children's Ministry

"Virtual Santa." Seems like an oxymoron if you stop and think about it. But virtual or not, it was Santa on the minds of the children who participated in this year's SMBTS's *Virtual Santa* program.

Since the Covid virus eliminated the opportunity for kids to sit on Santa's knee, the SMBTS Children's Ministry came up with a creative way to make that visit happen.



Parents were invited to sign up their kids for a "Virtual Visit" with Santa. Parents were given a questionnaire to fill out about their child. Santa, his Elf and Production Crew then made videos and sent them out to the families.

SMBTS's production crew was made up of Becki Hayman, Executive Producer and Director, Nate Hayman, Video and Sound production, Doris Pierce as "Cookie" the Elf, and Glenn Pierce as the big man himself, Santa.

"We had 15 participants for the program which we thought was great," said Hayman. The hope

is that some of those families will consider joining St. Matthews.



Dumpster Fire

From page 1

and helping one another.

The newness we seek comes, in part, from honoring the ancient wisdom of "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

You might not feel this need, but I need to recenter myself on Jesus—to recommit myself to his will. and way. There have been times in the last year, when I've lived more in fear and anxiety than in faith and trust. I don't think that it's as frustrating to Jesus as it is



heart-breaking. He understands why I have, but he doesn't want me to be mired-up in that kind of worry and wariness about life.

I've been angry in ways that aren't constructive. I can't help but feel anger when I, or people I love, or things I value are threatened. Anger energizes us to respond to such threats, and Jesus encourages me to use that anger in ways that address creatively what is wrong rather than in ways that add destructively still more wrong to the world.

I could go on with this confession: I've judged harshly; nurtured grievances and resentments rather than practicing forgiveness; and allow conflict to simmer without doing the hard work of seeking peace.

In 2021, I intend to spend a lot of time with the Sermon on the Mount. I trust that the presence, voice and guidance of Jesus can and will make all things new, including this year...and me.

February - March Birthdays

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------|----|--------------------|
| 2 | Rich Evans | 1 | Melanie Brack |
| 4 | Jenny Logan | | Hannah Dunlap |
| | Shirley Loveland | | Carol McCloud |
| 5 | Kelsey Korrell | 3 | Patsy Phillips |
| 6 | Kent Fredericksen | 5 | Danielle Blanchard |
| | Terry Wildermuth | | Hope Evans |
| 7 | Becki Hayman | | Susan Yocum |
| 8 | Jeanne Fohl | 7 | Rollin Otto |
| | Merrick Stecker | 9 | Anita Angeny |
| 9 | Sandy Argo | | Shirley Wiley |
| | Hank Housman | 10 | Sheryll Law |
| | Jesse Sheppard | | Ron Nagers |
| 12 | Bud Latham | 11 | Norma Lewis |
| | Linda Price | 12 | Mildred Herr |
| 15 | Alice Kelser | | Michele Overend |
| | Sue Seeds | 13 | Frank Evans |
| 19 | Ann Hurley | | Charlotte Hawkins |
| | Bob Jones | | Karen Nowell |
| 21 | Brian Cosgrove | 16 | Rich Robinson |
| 23 | Sam Mooney | 18 | Bob Nickle |
| 24 | Bob Ball | | Owen Gibson |
| 25 | Ellie Schaeffer | 19 | Ken Anderson |
| 26 | George Bell | 20 | Ida Saymon |
| 27 | Nathan Young | 21 | Judy Schoellkopf |
| 28 | Paul Daisey | 26 | Christa Brack |
| 29 | Ron Schaefer | 27 | Syd Stewart |
| | | 28 | Charlie Dukes |
| | | 29 | Mike Houser |
| | | | Philip Staurowsky |
| | | 30 | Brad Gibson |
| | | | John Hafner |
| | | | Cheryl Loveland |
| | | 31 | Doug Stewart |

The good thing about having a social life like mine is that you don't even notice you are in quarantine



Grappling with a Postponed Annual Conference

Organizers have yet to determine whether the pandemic-postponed General Conference can go forward as planned on Aug. 29-Sept. 7 in Minneapolis.

In the meantime, the Commission on the General Conference has decided not to reopen the usual process for accepting petitions — that is, proposed legislation — to The United Methodist Church's top lawmaking body.

That could have implications for the ability of General Conference delegates to have access to some big legislative proposals — including one outlining a potential denominational split — ahead of the assembly.

The Book of Discipline, which contains

the laws General Conference approves, says that petitions can be submitted until 230 days before General Conference. That would make Jan. 11 the deadline based on the late summer 2021 dates for the postponed General Conference.

The Discipline also allows annual conferences to submit legislation if they meet between 230 and 45 days before General Conference.

That puts the decision of whether General Conference considers the late-arriving petitions in the hands of the Committee on Reference, a bishop-appointed group of 24 delegates that typically meets the day before General Conference opens. The commission

asks that the Committee on Reference instead gather as soon as possible.

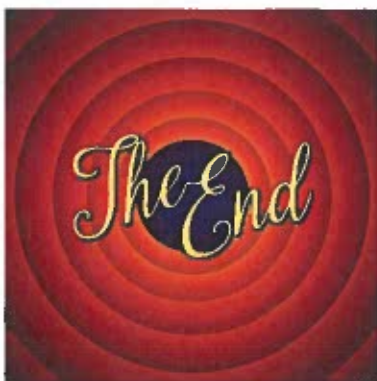
"The commission has remained consistent with the understanding of postponement as opposed to cancellation," commission leaders said in an emailed statement to United Methodist News. "Under postponement, the General Conference petition process is ongoing."

Bottom line: The commission has no plans to publish another print edition of [the Advance Daily Christian Advocate](#), which contains the petitions heading to General Conference.

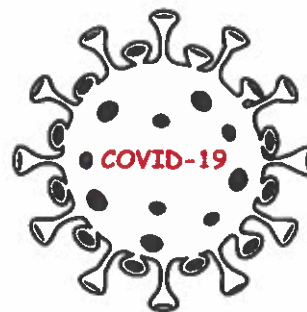
It's Finally Over!

Here are 12 things for us to consider as we close the door on 2020—one of the craziest years of our lifetime!

1. The dumbest thing I ever bought was a 2020 planner.
2. I was so bored I called Jake from State Farm just to talk to someone. He asked me what I was wearing.
3. 2019—Stay away from negative people. 2020—Stay away from positive people.
4. The world has turned upside down. Old folks are sneaking out of the house while their kids are yelling at them to stay indoors.
5. This morning I saw a neighbor talking to her dog. It was obvious she thought the dog understood her. I came into the house and told my cat. We laughed a lot.



6. Every few days try on your jeans just to make sure they fit. Pajamas will have you believe all is well in the kingdom
7. Does anyone know if we can take showers yet or should we just keep washing our hands?
 8. This virus has done what no woman has ever been able to do. Cancel sports, shut down all bars and keep men at home.
 9. I never thought the comment "I wouldn't touch them with a 6 foot pole" would become a national policy, but here we are!
 10. I need to practice social-distancing from the refrigerator.
 11. I hope the weather is good tomorrow for my trip to the Backyard. I'm getting tired of the Living Room.
12. Never in a million years could I have imagined I would walk up to the bank teller wearing a mask and ask for money.



Pastor Mike and Ann Hurley are glad to report that everyone in the family affected by COVID is healing and making

slow, steady progress toward recovery. They express to all grateful thanks for all the cards, thoughts and prayers that have helped immensely in the healing process.

Pastor Mike will remotely begin reconnecting and interacting with us and hopes to meet with us soon via ZOOM.

The January Trustee and Administrative Council meetings will not meet this month and are being rescheduled – dates forthcoming.

Sunday services will continue though January as one service at 10:45 am. The FM broadcast at 100.5 FM will be available for those wishing to worship with us in the parking lot. The video version on Facebook and the Website Are Available for those staying at home. Please join us in worship. We continue to pray collectively for the health and safety of all during this time of medical and social uncertainty.