



Pastor's Report

Charge Conference
Saint Paul's United Methodist Church
Pawleys Island, SC

November 22, 2020

Rev. Wm. H. Phillips

This is the most unusual year to submit a Pastor's report. In-home, nursing homes, and hospital visits were impossible to make. Ministry has been limited to phone calls, emails, text messages, cards, and letters. I have done one on one counseling in the study and a few sitting with windows down in our cars in the church parking lot. It was strange but amazingly effective.

Early on, I created a health team comprised of a physician, a pharmacist, two nurses, and a school official of Georgetown School System (*who assists in making recommendations to the district on responses to COVID*), and a physical therapist. They have done a remarkable job analyzing the necessary data to keep us safe as a church. It has not been easy for them, for they have endured many complaints.

Although I sought to have an on-line Bible Study, I was unable to do so. I do not have the cell tower strength on my phone, and the Church does not have the wifi speed to make that possible. According to those smarter on these things than I am, there would have been continual buffering and dropped signal. Therefore, we have been limited to recording sermons and uploading them to Facebook and our website. Because we do not have the proper equipment, it has been quite difficult for Charles Estabrook to record, edit, reformat, and post the sermons. It has taken him countless hours to do a single sermon, and he has been doing this since march while holding down a very demanding job.

I know many have been upset because the Church has been closed to in-house worship. The Health Team, however, felt it was in the best interest of the Church not to. We do have an older congregation, and infection could mean death for the victim of the virus.

I also understand a few have been troubled by us not having an outdoor service. There were many obstacles with this. We do not have the youth, nor did we have the volunteers, to set up and take down seating, set up musical equipment, and run the necessary electrical wiring. We did not have an outdoor stage. Neither do we have an outdoor stage that would help with visibility.

Some were disturbed, the Church closed to outside groups. We had no classrooms large enough to have safe distancing between attendees and adequate ventilation to ensure health safety. This

was not only a health issue but a moral and ethical concern as well. I am happy to report that all those groups are returning with the addition of one new one.

On another happy note, I think I would be amiss if I did not congratulate and thank the Saints of Saint Paul's UMC on how well they responded financially. At the time of this writing, we have received more monies than received in 2019. That speaks highly of their loyalty, commitment, dedication to God's Kingdom, and their faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Like every next year, it comes with uncertainty. We do not know what we will be doing in response to the virus next year and for how long. We will do it, however, with grace and dignity. We will do it in unity as a family of faith. We will do it with the confidence that comes knowing God is already in the future waiting on us with arms open and welcoming.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Dr. Wm. H. Phillips