

Dear Friends,

April was, of course, marked by Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Sunrise and 10:00 am Easter festival service of worship at First Pres. Newark. Each of the services went very well, except for the Good Friday service which had some technical difficulties. Palm Sunday was well attended, and the palms added to the service. Maundy Thursday Ecumenical service involved three local churches in Newark. Most of the congregation that evening was from First Pres. with a few visitors from the community. Hopefully, many people from the community were able to see the service online. Easter Sunrise service was a challenge with the temperature dropping into the 30's. The congregation was small and well bundled up. Easter 10:00 am service was everything I had hoped it would be. Each element of the music groups added greatly to the service. Rodney on the organ, but also coordinating all the different musical offerings. The Praise Band bringing a beautiful anthem and augmenting the choir filled the musical sound. Perhaps the greatest part of all were the hymns. Between, the choir, the organ, the Praise Band, the Clarion Brass ensemble, and the strength of the congregational singing the music soared to heights that I had not heard since I arrived.

Easter was joyful, beautiful, challenging, meaningful, bursting with energy and excitement, Hope filled and spoke of the great possibilities that stand before this congregation. In the future, I would encourage all committees avoid meeting and during Holy Week and focus on attending the worship activities. It is this week that defines the Christian faith and gives leaders both the energy, but the underpinning to continue with the work of seeking the Holy Spirit.

The Sunday School has bravely shouldered on during innumerable challenges. It's quite a team, and though I can do no more than make a video each week, I feel blessed to be part of this amazing effort. The confirmation class is going well. We have 3 young people in the class; Seona Stevenson, and Conner and Tyler Dube. We meet by zoom every Sunday at 12:30 pm.

Finally, this month has also been marked by the loss of 2 members of our church family, Sue Chantler, and Karl Fickeissen. We will held a memorial service for Jim Aftosmis, who passed away last November. I met with the 3 families to plan the memorial services. I have only been with the church for 1 year, but it has been a privilege to get to know these who have now gone on to be part of the great cloud of witnesses.

It has been an exhausting and exhilarating month. It is wonderful to see the different musical groups and talents of the church meld together to praise the Lord. I deeply appreciate so many

people who work so hard to make Sunday worship possible. It is very encouraging for the congregation to see our elders, deacons, and trustees assist in leading worship services. Though there are many we can see up front we also need to keep in mind those who are behind the curtain, those who run sound, and those who make sure all the needed connections are in place, and the correct equipment is turned on. A big thank you to all who do so much.

