

2023 August 16 Pastor's Report

School Supplies

15 backpacks having supplies in them have been delivered to the school along with 40 other boxes of crayons, as many #2 pencils and notebooks, extra erasers and rulers and pencil sharpeners. The school was delighted with the supplies. Actually, they are pleased to have the extras and in containers because sometimes a student has some things but not all.

A request came in on Tuesday for 2 Kids in Distress. They need backpack and supplies.

This local church has been wonderful with the collection of school supplies and the school was informed that when more come in they will be delivered.

Sally McNinch memorial TBD.

September 17 Erin Dunsmore's/Raelyn

The current in-person worshipers are wonderful and their smiles every Sunday make all the difference.

Some reasons some do not attend religious services:

We do not align theologically anymore with the church or the MI Conference.

We do not align politically with the church (it has gotten either too liberal or too conservative and has replaced the Gospel with ideology).

We simply cannot be a part of a church that does not welcome, include, and celebrate *everyone*.

We just got out of the habit during COVID and haven't mustered up the will to return.

Our lives are busy, and so Sunday mornings are too precious to spend waking early, getting dressed up and driving to go somewhere to be around people.

We were too hurt by church to ever heal enough to return again.

The pastor we loved is gone and the new one isn't to our liking.

When COVID hit we were deeply disappointed in the church's response: either because of a perceived over-response (succumbing to fear and closing its doors), or because of a perceived under-response (too cavalier in opening back up and ending mask requirements).

When the local church becomes ONA [open and affirming] I might come.

Because the church has become part of the ONA coalition I'm not interested.

We find connection with God and others more elsewhere than in the church.

Some reasons we DO regularly attend religious services:

We have a feeling of belonging there and the community is welcoming and inclusive, cares about loving the neighbor, and cares for those on the margins.

Worshipping with others is an important part of our faith.

I come to be with and support my church friends. Often, I think other's need to see that after a tragedy one can survive.

This is what I have observed Especially since COVID

It seems that many just want to skip through worship from home. On our most recent Communion Sunday there were seven in attendance.

Too many of our wonderful members have passed into eternal life which has reduced attendance at services and

Our stewardship mailing went out to 41 addresses. That is a very small mailing!

For years there have been no new members to speak of.

Too few have been willing to sign up to get the elements ready for Communion Sunday.

Do we need to heat a building that is only used on Sunday and once a month for Church Council and Quilters. Renting space out could happen if we somehow had gates to block off the Sanctuary where all the audio-visual technology is for Sunday use.

Steps everywhere is an issue and when there is a funeral in the building it is difficult getting the casket up the steps and in. Even a funeral/memorial with cremation, a choice is often made to have everything at the funeral home. No steps there!

Is the building becoming the “Elephant in the Living Room”? Local churches seem to grow around the pastor’s age: ten years on either side of a pastor’s age. Our local church needs the empty nesters and so many of them are the sandwich generation that will have kids in college and eldering parents that need assistance. This local church needs MORE families with energy. Only a few have opted to assist with the cleaning.

GRACE Church down the street has lots of access to young families because the Pastor is a school bus driver.

Imagine, will you, that God forbid, something happens to Price. Keep in mind his daughter has been upstairs on the camera and she also leads some praise music prior to our going on-line. No Price, No Devin.

The power-point can be done from downstairs but can also be done by the person upstairs. We have one of the better presentations of our worship but without anyone wanting to learn the how-to, where will the local church be? Price has been excellent with the worship, cameras, light, sound.

It would be great to have a clergy couple with young children with no secret agenda, only the calling to serve this local church. That would attract young families and grow in a new direction. We are not red, not blue, but purple. This community want's the Gospel message; awareness that issues are out there is fine but being manipulated into one way of thinking is not how this local church want's to be.

Is it time to have a new pastor by the beginning of the Church year that begins with the first Sunday of Advent?

Respectfully submitted, Pastor KatieD+ 8/16/2023