

## Moderator's Report – 2020

This is my third (and last!) Moderator's Report for the United Presbyterian Church of Sackets Harbor. During 2020, I fulfilled the responsibilities of a Commission on Ministry (COM) - appointed moderator of your session by moderating ten stated (regular) session meetings (seven in-person and three via Zoom), three called (special) session meetings, one Annual Congregational Meeting, and one called (special) Congregational Meeting. In my role as the church's COM liaison, I made several hospital calls in your behalf before visits were curtailed due to COVID-19 restrictions.

I also served as a resource to your Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) and provided the members with documents: expectations for neutral pulpit weekends and candidating weekends, questions for Zoom interviews of prospective pastors, and samples of letters and brochures to introduce the PNC's choice of a pastor to members of the church. I made arrangements for one of the neutral pulpits.

In addition to serving as your COM moderator and liaison, I also am one of this congregation's supply preachers. During January – March and October – December, I preached and led in-person worship on the second Sunday of the month. From April 5 (Palm Sunday) through September 6, I prepared online, abbreviated worship services that Dick Stephens recorded via Zoom and uploaded to YouTube. Those 23 weeks (almost six months!) of preaching to one congregation gave me the opportunity to preach through the lectionary scriptures from Genesis and Exodus. One of the faithful viewers of these Sunday services (a member of another church in the Presbytery of Northern New York) shared how pleased she was to learn things about the first two books of the Bible. Another viewer (a member of a Lutheran Church in the North Country) has become an email pal (formerly pen pal!) of mine!

Kudos to Dick Stephens for the countless hours, both in recording and editing, that he gave to this church. Thanks also to Greg Stephens for helping his dad with this weekly work. Because of this father-son duo's technological gifts, this church was able to continue to share the Word of God with those near and far.

At the dawn of 2020, no one imagined the profound year of change and adaptation that awaited us. But change and adaptation is what all of us, including faith communities, did last year to respond to the global coronavirus pandemic. This last year has given us the opportunity to keep moving forward and to remember what gives us strength. As people of faith, our strength is from God, Emmanuel, who always is with us, always listening to our prayers for healing, relief, justice, peace, reform, and wisdom.

As you welcome Summer Sattora, your new pastor, in February and grow deeper in your faith, may you bear witness to the love of God and live in the way of Ephesians 5:1-2: "Watch what God does and then you do it, like children who learn proper behavior from their parents. Mostly what God does is love you. Keep company with God and learn a life of love. Observe how Christ loved us. His love was not cautious but extravagant. He didn't love in order to get something from us but to give everything of himself to us. Love like that" (*The Message*).

Grace and peace,  
Marti Montovani, Moderator

