

Pastor's Report for 2024 Annual Meeting

This is always one of the hardest things to do: sum up an entire year in one quick report. Suddenly as I try to think back on the past twelve months I find my mind drawing a blank. I know things happened, but what were they? As I stand on the cusp of our fourth year together, I can look back at things that worked, things that didn't work, things that are WIPs (Works In Progress), and I pray that I can continue to be open to the ways the Spirit is bringing us together in community and guiding us to serve those outside of our building walls. One of those ways is the start of the Sackets Harbor Community Collective. We started the group this past spring when some folks realized that there were different groups and organizations in the village that were all doing similar work in the community, but without communicating with each other. We came together to brainstorm and pool our resources and work together to fill a need that many in the village don't realize is there. You may have noticed the Little Free Pantry outside the library or the Pantry Annex in our narthex or the shelves for the School Snack Drive. We are in the process of creating our by-laws so that we can begin becoming an official not-for-profit organization. We also have continued to participate in village events (see the Deacons and Fellowship circle reports) and are looking at ways to open our doors to the community through our now-annual Soup Sale and an upcoming Spaghetti Dinner. The generosity of the people in our church continues to amaze me, as everyone so often steps up to give to the Special Offerings throughout the year or help with the Gift of the Heart hygiene kits or bake cookies for numerous sales and events or volunteer to help when needed. I have continued a weekly Bible study and I've tried to offer a variety of topics that might spark some interest. I look at our studies as a time to come together and share our thoughts on Scripture and how we relate to it or what it might have to say to us in our context, doing my best to facilitate discussion. I was a part of a small number of funerals this past year as well as a baptism. We had three people join the church in the spring. I served communion nine Sundays as well as at our Maundy Thursday service and on Easter Sunday. We once again participated in the Ecumenical Sunrise Service on Easter and Thanksgiving Service in November, and took part in an Ecumenical One Day VBS this summer.

Outside of the church, I was involved in a few different ways in our Presbytery. I continue to sit on Coordinating Council and attend Zoom meetings in the months the Presbytery doesn't meet. I also am the chair of the Presbytery Nominating Committee. This past fall I found myself a part of the group that was looking at the Staffing Structure of PNNY following David Bennett's announcement that he was stepping down at the end of the year. I have attended Presbytery meetings, both in person and on Zoom. Also this October I once again attended Synod Assembly as a commissioner from our Presbytery.

My continuing Education involved attending a virtual conference for Next Church in the spring and the second year of my Credo Conference in the fall. I also attended different webinars on a variety of topics, most leaning towards social justice. I also have a small handful of podcasts I listen to and an ever-growing list of books to read in the hopes that I won't find myself becoming complacent. I want to always be growing and learning.

We have a Yoga class that continues to meet on Thursdays, and this past year the instructor added a second class on Tuesdays. We also have a Tai Chi group that meets once a week and in the past couple of months a Ukulele group has started meeting here as well. I would love to see us continue to be a space for community groups to meet and gather and utilize space that sits empty most of the time.

Looking ahead, I am always going to be encouraging us to learn and grow, to open ourselves to the community, to find ways to *do* mission, and to offer (or at least want to offer) opportunities for learning and study. I hope that you will go on that journey with me.

Blessings,

Pastor Summer