

Vicar's Report / June Church Council Meeting

"From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace." John 1:16

It all started in the garden. Last August, when my family and I first arrived at Mount Cross, we were welcomed to worship in the prayer garden. Arriving in the middle of the pandemic yet being welcomed in the middle of a prayer garden, a place of hope and beauty, gave us a glimpse of what was to come. I was struck right away by the creativity and resiliency of this congregation. It was one of the first graces of many that have been a part of my Mount Cross internship experience and my formation toward ordained ministry. Highlights of my learning and growing with you over the past year include:



- **Preaching, Teaching, & Worship:** Preaching 12 times, giving children's sermons, leading Upper Room Zoom, and teaching both adults and youth in Bible Studies (Women's, Men's, Pericope Study, Lenten Study, Gospel of Mark series, Sr. High Bible Study, Confirmation). Assisting in leading Sunday worship and preschool chapel, collaborating in ecumenical worship with Sr. Columba's, and assisting Pastor Julie with a funeral.
- **Pastoral Care:** Due to the pandemic, drive-through Communion became the most consistent opportunity for interacting with and praying for congregants. Pastoral care also took the form of phone calls, notes, and a few home visits. Because my internship is also shared with Holy Spirit Retreat Center in Encino <https://www.hsrcenter.com>, I had additional pastoral care opportunities with my work there as a Spiritual Director. I currently see 10 directees for an hour each (monthly) via Zoom. To learn more about Spiritual Direction [click here ▶](#)
- **Service & Outreach Ministries:** Working with both the Peace and Justice team, co-leading the monthly Anti-Racism Check-ins, and working in various ways with the Care Team.
- **Leadership Growth/Training Opportunities:** Training in 'Mediation and Peacemaking' through the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, leading a day retreat, "Calling all Peacemakers" at Holy Spirit Retreat Center in January. Receiving 'Authentic Diversity Training' through our synod with Pastor Julie, attending workshops on "Becoming a Hybrid Church" and on the new hymnal "All Creation Sings." Attending 6 sessions with clergy in our synod and beyond, discussing with the author Rev. Marj Funk-Pihl, her church vitality program "Living the Resurrection: Helping Congregations Thrive." Providing managerial support with our Moorpark College tech interns' program.
- **On the Horizon:** Will be receiving training in marital counseling through "Prepare & Enrich," visiting the Sisters of Mercy's border ministry in San Diego, meeting with Keith Selbrede to learn more about good church financial oversight practices, and connecting with Rev. Tracy Williams at Holy Redeemer Lutheran Church in Bellflower.

"Grace upon Grace" is a fitting description of my time here, and I am so grateful for my opportunities to learn and serve with you. More than anything, I am grateful for the relationships and connections I have made. Pastor Julie, the staff, and my Lay Internship Committee led by Kristine Dawson, have all given me abundant support and mentoring. I have had the privilege to work alongside many of you and have been encouraged and inspired by the leadership and commitment for the ongoing work of this congregation.

It has been wonderful to see the ways in which the Holy Spirit has worked and continues to work through all of you. Your adaptability and creativity during this time of pandemic, and the vitality of your outreach both with-in and outside of the community, are so apparent. My prayer for you is that you continue to be a light on this hill in Camarillo (a hill with a prayer garden!), anchored in prayer and Christ's love, continuing in the ways of hospitality and welcome to all, with ongoing care and concern for those affected by life's struggles and injustices, and bringing Christ's love wherever it is needed. Thank you for graciously welcoming me into your community. Grace & Peace to you all!

With much gratitude and love in Christ,

Vicar Amanda +