

## **Pastor's Report for December 2025 Council Meeting**

(11/18/24-12/14/25)

**Worship:** Thank you to Pastor Marc for giving the message at Holden Evening Prayer on Thanksgiving Eve (11/26) and Pastor Ralph for preaching on the First Sunday of Advent (11/30), allowing me to be present for both worship services in a different way. I preached three sermons in this reporting period: "Only Mercy" on Reign of Christ Sunday (11/23/25), "Say Yes to Being Unsettled" (12/7/25), and "Say Yes to Patience" (12/14/25). I look forward to the Children's Pageant at worship next Sunday (12/21) as well as Blue Christmas at Cam UMC in the afternoon of 12/21. I will preach at our 4:30 Christmas Eve service on 12/24 and likely also the 11 p.m. service at St. Columba's. I will also be present at their 10:30 a.m. Christmas Day service. Advertising the two additional Christmas services at St. Columba's is our solution this year to the reality that, while it is a joyful thing to have one very packed Christmas Eve service, there are Mount Cross members who prefer an alternative to our 4:30 p.m. service, but we do not yet have the volunteer capacity to support two Christmas services.

**Personnel:** We had staff meetings November 18 and December 9. I continue to work with Pastor Marc to assist him in getting acclimated to our many programs and events. It is wonderful to have him serving with us. On December 11, I met with Deacon Cecelia, Tom Neuhaus (the Chair of Personnel Committee) and Susan Prosser and LaJean Wenzel from the Senior Ministry Committee to review the Deacon Ministry Description/arrangement with the Synod. We celebrated our Deacon's ministry and the work of the Senior Ministry Committee, suggested minor changes to the agreement, and discussed concerns relating to the Deacons work-load and the challenge of sharing space. We will meet again in the summer to discuss concerns and review the agreement again.

**Service to the Wider Church:** This month I completed my two years of service to Thriving In Ministry, a Lily Endowment funded program run by Virginia Theological Seminary. I served as mentor and coach to other clergy who are involved in ecumenical or cross-denominational ministry. While praying about what my next service call is, I said "Yes" to helping with the 2026 Southwest California Synod Assembly.

**Pathways 2026:** Our last Pathways meeting was 11/16. I will present a draft summary to Council. Thank you God for those who served with me as Pathfinders: Gayle Johnson, Bill Stoll, Susan Proseer, Kevin O'Farrell, Craig Blois, Tim and Maria McDonell, and Becky Riley!!

**And More:** My great joy is pastoral care and I'm grateful for all the opportunities this month to visit with Mount Cross members and friends who are exploring God's presence and call in their lives or need spiritual support. All the regular Bible Studies, Pre-school chapels, Confirmation Classes and other committee meetings and programs continue. This is ministry we do together and I am thankful for our excellent Mount Cross staff and volunteers who are so adept at leadership and service!!

**Looking Ahead:** I will be away December 31-January 10. Pastor Marc will preach and preside on January 4, 2026 and be on call for pastoral emergencies, along with local clergy. I will be back to preside on January 11, and Pastor Ralph will preach that day.

**Please mark your calendar for an all-church worship assistant training on Sunday, January 11 at 11 a.m.!**

God bless you all as we near our celebration of Christmas!