

Pastor's Report for May Church Council Meeting

April 18 - May 15, 2023

In addition to regular ministry, including worship planning, preaching, pastoral care, Bible studies, preschool chapel, staff supervision, and committee meetings, here are some things that come to mind as I reflect on the past month and look towards the summer.

Sincere thanks to Marilyn Gardner!

Marilyn Gardner recently retired from her role as Coordinator of the Helping Hands Ministry. She has served in that role for as long as I have been at Mount Cross, and I'm sure for many years prior! Countless families have been comforted by her and her team's efforts to coordinate receptions following funeral services at Mount Cross. Thank you and God bless you, Marilyn! As we look for a replacement for Marilyn, I am grateful to those who are willing to help at the upcoming service for Nancy Jaeger (May 18).

Clergy Conference

I attended the Episcopal Clergy Conference in Riverside May 1-3. The theme was "Moving forward as Beloved Community: Lament, Hope, Communion." It was a good opportunity to connect with my Episcopal colleagues. I was able to share about our recent collaborations for Lent and Holy Week with our full communion partner churches. Many large and small group discussions during the conference focused on the need for all congregations to be creative in addressing declining membership, insufficient staffing, and limited financial resources.

Diaper Pantry

Redimidos is an ELCA worshipping community that meets at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Oxnard. Redimidos sponsors Graceful Diapers, a monthly diaper pantry for low-income neighbors. I volunteered there on May 6 and was moved to see the extreme need of families, many of whom began lining up nearly two hours before the distribution began, for a pack of 25 diapers. God bless the Pastor of Redimidos, Jade Ortiz, and their youth group and other volunteers who serve the community this way each month. They are in need of additional sponsors for the diaper pantry. I hope Mount Cross can commit diapers and volunteers for 2-3 months each year.

Future Collaboration with Full Communion Partners

In meetings this month with Pastors Elbert Kim (Camarillo UMC) and Mark Asman (St. Columba's Episcopal) we celebrated the grace-filled Holy Week services we were able to do together and discussed ideas for future collaboration, including: a symposium on "The Future of the Church" at 4 p.m. on Reformation Sunday, October 29; all three churches coming to Mount Cross on Nov. 23 for Thanksgiving Eve Holden Evening Prayer and Pie Social; joining together for a "Blue Christmas" service on December 17 at 4 p.m.; joining together for a community service day some Sunday, following a brief worship service; and definitely sharing Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil again next year.

Child Development Center

Now that the CDC is a separate organizational entity from the church, I serve as a voting member on their Board of Directors. Their May 6 silent auction and mocktail party was successful – thank you to all who supported it! I am on the working group (along with other CDC board members and members of the Executive Committee) to draft a document celebrating the CDC-Church relationship and delineating responsibilities of each entity. The mission statement of the CDC states: *Our mission at Mount Cross Child Development Center strives to educate young children in a safe and nurturing environment that will help prepare them to enjoy learning, care for the earth, serve others, and spread God's love in the community.*

Looking Ahead

- God bless Miera Stouch and Daphne Lewis who will be confirmed May 21.
- Synod Assembly is June 2-3 at CLU.

- Continuing Education Week: I was selected to be a Mentor-Coach for a program called *Thriving in Ministry* out of Virginia Theological Seminary. I will be in Virginia for training June 12-18. The Rev. Sara Wilson, Director of Seminary Relations for PLTS will preach and preside on June 18.
- I will be on vacation June 29-July 6 and July 19-26. The Rev. Susan Klein will preach and preside on July 2. The Rev. Dr. Colleen Windham-Hughes, CLU Professor, will preach and preside on July 23.

Thank you, Church Council, for your service to our congregation!