

**Pastor John W. Soyster -- Final Report  
For the Church Council meeting, November 14, 2017**

**I. Activity for October & November 1-5, 2017**

**A. Visitation**

- Shut-in/home Communion: 9 (20, year-to-date)
- Member/visitor home visits: 6 (18)
- Hospital/convalescent home/jail visits: 6 (30)
- Telecare calls: 14 (54)
- Birthday cards: 46 (418)

**B. Meetings**

- Mount Cross: Weekly church staff meetings, Executive Committee, Church Council, Meredith, Worship & Music staff & committee; Communion Ministers planning; Mutual Ministry Committee (exit interview).
- Conference, Interfaith, other: Sunday afternoon service at Alma Via (the last one; started in 2001), Leisure Village Bible Study (the last one; started in 1992); Conference pastors.

**C. Pastoral Acts:**

- Baptisms – 2 (9), Weddings – 1 (4), Funerals – 1\* (7) [Scattering of Barbara Meyer's ashes]
- Bible Studies, Sunday School classes, etc. Sunday morning: 3 (31), Tuesday morning: 2 (19), Wednesday evening : 4 (32).

**D. Special Events:** Luther & The Reformation (#10 of 10); Worship Assistant training; CDC Back-To-School night & Staff Installation; Classical Concert; Quilt blessing; 1<sup>st</sup> CDC Chapel for the school year (and my last CDC Chapel, too); New Member Orientation & Reception; Reformation service & sermon; Meredith and Scott's wedding.

**E. Counseling Hours:**

- Pre-marital: 1 (7)
- Pre-baptism: 1 (6)
- Crisis/other: 3 (45)

**II. Information & Action Items For Council**

- **Exit Interview.** The Mutual Ministry Committee (Becky Riley, Dianne Selbrede, Kevin Churchill and Craig Blois) met with me on October 30 to conduct an exit interview. A summary of that conversation is being sent to the Executive Committee.
- **Worship Assistant Training.** There was a pretty good turnout for the training event on October 1. Here are a few changes of which you should be aware:
  - I asked all worship assistants to check in with the new pastors prior to the start of each service, so they will know that the various assignments are covered for that service. Sheri will add this to the weekly email to worship assistants.
  - I suggested that the Greeter's job be moved outside next to the kiosk and that the kiosk be upgraded with some kind of sign that identifies it as a visitor center.
  - I added the following to the instructions for Readers: ***“You may just read the passage. You may also read the short introduction that is printed in the worship folder, but this is not necessary. Please do not add your own comments or explanations to the reading. You may inadvertently introduce a different theme than the one the preacher was intending.”***

- **Membership Roster Concerns.** I have delivered to Sheri a printout of the entire list of names in our database. I have lined out in red those I believe should be removed from the data base. Many of these names are identified as ‘friend’ or ‘visitor’ or ‘prospect.’ I have highlighted in yellow those members/households that we have not seen in some time and should be contacted. If you should choose to use it, a sample letter and response care can be seen [here](#).

- **My email.** Effective November 6, when someone sends an email to pastorjohn@mountcross.com, they will get this reply: *Pastor John retired from Mount Cross on November 5, 2017. If you need to reach someone at the church, please email office@mountcross.com or phone 805-492-3847.* The Mutual Ministry Committee, during my exit interview, raised concerns about what might happen if someone truly needed pastoral care during an emergency. And if emails to my old address were forwarded to other than a pastor, would there be confidentiality issues. The Council can consult with the office manager and Jim Gucciardo (who manages our web and email services) to come to a decision and solution.

### **Miscellaneous leavings:**

- Sheri will have all of the photos and videos I have taken of the progress of the pavilion project transferred to her computer.
- By Sunday afternoon I will have returned my keys: to the church & sound room; the video cabinet in the PLC; the safe; the personnel & Safeguarding file cabinet in my office; my desk.
- I have transferred management of the Safeguarding God’s Children files and process to Meredith Smith. Background checks have all been done by me up to this point. They require getting Social Security and other confidential information which is used to submit the request for the background check. In addition, she is responsible for periodic continuing education on child safety to be sent to the names on the roster of those who have been checked. When we launched this program, it was decided that the pastor should be the one to maintain this sensitive information. The Council can decide what to do going forward.
- I was not able to find sponsors for the people who joined Mount Cross on October 22. There are many names of potential sponsors in the Time & Talent database.
- Joan Brundage, the new Financial Secretary, will now be responsible for moving the offering from where the ushers leave it after each service to the safe. This begins November 5.
- I have left a ‘caring list’ for the pastor(s) who follow me so they will have information on those who might need a little extra attention.
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- Sheri has a folder in which are a few items related to the possible installation of a columbarium at Mount Cross, along with names of those who are interested in working on the project. When this ideas was first introduced some time back, it was met with enthusiasm. I insisted that the project not get ahead of the proposed pavilion project. But now that the pavilion is underway, the Council can decide when to turn on the ‘green light.’ Also, there is already some money dedicated to the project: \$100 in designated account 36000 Columbarium and an additional \$2280 in memorial funds that have been directed to the same.

### **Hopes for the future:**

- I hope that the interim before a new permanent pastor is as short as possible, but also as long as it is takes for people to move on from saying, “Pastor John never did it *that way*.”
- When it is time for the MET (Mission Exploration Team) process to begin, I hope you work that process for all it is worth. It will be the key to opening the door to Mount Cross’ future. The times ahead will be challenging in lots of ways. But if those you invite hear an invitation to join you in doing “God’s work, Our hands,” the future will be bright.

- I hope that in addition to providing much needed meeting and fellowship space for the congregation, the new pavilion can also serve the neighborhood. I hope a way might be found to allow the neighbors to use the pavilion for anniversary and birthday parties and the like. The structure might serve as a means by which Mount Cross truly becomes connected to its neighborhood. And if you're looking for a name for it, consider something like "*The Isaiah 25 Pavilion*" (see verse 4) or "*The Psalm 91 Pavilion*" (see verses 1 & 2).
- I know there are many who have reacted negatively to the recently mailed Covenant. I am sorry about that. I hope that you will be able to guide those folks to a place where they will see how necessary it is. If it seems an unnecessarily harsh way to end our relationship, perhaps if it can be seen as a way of creating a fresh start for the pastor that follow me, that will help.

**Finally...Thank you!** In my October report I thanked you and all the Councils with which I have worked over 26 years for your integrity, dedication and good humor while doing the Lord's work.

Let me now add to that a word of thanks to you, and through you, to the whole congregation, for the overwhelming send off this past weekend (this is pretty much the same thank you that I will send to Sheri for the next Grapevine). Saturday's banquet and program was an absolute blast - a wonderful mixture of laughs and tears (turns out the tears were a warm up for the next morning). The many gifts and presentations were Mount Cross being Mount Cross - meaning you've shown me and my family love and support from the beginning to the end. For that I will always be grateful.

And then there was Sunday. Your generosity on Saturday was repeated with more gifts to me and to Leslie - very, very generous ones, Again, thank you. And I hope you will understand that one of my gifts back to you were the many tears that I shed that morning. As I handed the Body of Christ to each of you one last time, and as I looked at you, I briefly replayed the many experiences we shared and, as I said on Saturday, the many times and many ways you trusted me to enter into your holy times and stand on your holy ground - the joyful times and places as well as the painful ones. Those tears were my thanks for that trust and for the bond we shared, as brothers and sisters in Christ these many years.

Charter member Chuck Proctor, when he prayed, in one way or another always seemed to include the same phrase, asking that God would "*guide and direct.*" I conclude with thanks that Jesus Christ, Lord and head of the Church, which includes Mount Cross, will continue to be present with powerful grace to guide and direct you into the future that God has planned.