

Pastor John W. Soyster
Report for the Church Council meeting, October 11, 2016

I. Activity for September 2016

A. Visitation

- Shut-in/home Communion: 0 (18, year-to-date)
- Member/visitor home visits: 1 (13)
- Hospital/convalescent home/jail visits: 1 (8)
- Telecare calls: 3 (29)
- Stephen Ministry referrals: 0 (0)
- 50,000 Acts of Service: **10,386** (as of 9/28/16)

B. Meetings

- **Mount Cross:** Church Council, 50th Anniversary Committee (2), Preparations for start of Confirmation, Church Staff.
- **Conference, Ecumenical, Interfaith, other:** Sunday afternoon service at Alma Via, Interfaith Harvest event, Leisure Village Bible Study, Alma Via Volunteer appreciation event.

C. Pastoral Acts:

- Baptisms – 0 (12), Weddings – 0 (0), Funerals – 1 (6)
- Bible Studies, Sunday School classes, etc. Sunday morning: 1 (26), Tuesday morning: 1 (15), Wednesday evening : 3 (10).

D. Special Events:

- New Wednesday format, CDC Parent Orientations, Peace Pole Dedication at the Library, 50th Anniversary Coffee House.

E. Counseling Hours:

- Pre-marital: 0 (0)
- Pre-baptism: 0 (7)
- Crisis/other: 6 (48).

II. Information & Action Items For Council

50th Anniversary. As you can see above, we passed the ten thousand mark for our Acts of Service! I am very proud of the work that Mount Cross has done toward this awesome goal. I am also looking forward to the final events of our anniversary year, especially the big Anniversary Celebration Service on October 23. Thanks to the Committee who has worked ALL YEAR to make this a memorable year and a launching pad for the next 50 years.

Feast of Faiths. Speaking of interfaith activities, Mount Cross will host this year's *Feast of Faiths*, jointly sponsored by the Ventura County Interfaith Community and Campus Interfaith. The dinner will gather people from a variety of faith traditions around tables for food and conversation. November 6, beginning at 4:00 p.m.

Polling place. On November 8 we hope to host a polling place for middle and high school students so they can practice taking part in our democratic process and cast a (mock) vote for President. I'm hoping to identify a variety of helpers to staff the polling place from 2:00 - 8:00 pm.

Luther and the Reformation. As a follow up to my study leave tour of Luther's Saxony, I have scheduled a "Luther Day" each month, with an afternoon and an evening session, unpacking the story of

Luther and the start of the Reformation in bite-sized portions throughout the year, leading up to the date we will commemorate the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation, October 30, 2017. You can find the schedule [here](#).

III. DATES:

- October 8 - church cleaning day, 8 am
- October 15 - Memorial service for Marjorie Browne, 1 pm
- October 16 - CDC Back to School night, 4:30 pm
- October 23 - Festival 50th Anniversary service, program, cornerstone placement and luncheon. Bishop Erwin preaching.
- October 29 - [New City Parish](#) Fall Event, 5 pm (see Pastor John for ticket info)
- October 30 - Classical Concert, 2 pm
- November 3 - New Member Orientation
- November 6 - All Saints Day & remembrance of our faithful departed
- November 6 - Mount Cross is hosting this year's Feast of Faiths.
- November 8 - Mount Cross will host a youth polling place.
- November 13 - Reception of New Members
- November 23 - Thanksgiving Eve Worship & Pie Social, 7 pm
- December 4 - Sunday School Christmas presentation, 10:00 am
- December 4 - Christmas concert by music ministries, 7 pm
- December 8 - CDC Family Christmas program, 6:30 pm
- December 11 - Camarillo Community Band Christmas Concert, 4:30 pm
- December 24 - Christmas Eve services at 5, 8 & 10 pm
- December 25 - Christmas Day worship at 10:00 am (one service only)
- January 1 - New Year's Day worship at 10:00 am (one service only)

Pastor John W. Soyster

Report for the Church Council meeting, September 13, 2016

I. Activity for August 2016

A. Visitation

- Shut-in/home Communion: 0 (18, year-to-date)
- Member/visitor home visits: 3 (12)
- Hospital/convalescent home/jail visits: 2 (7)
- Telecare calls: 0 (26)
- Stephen Ministry referrals: 0 (0)
- 50,000 Acts of Service: **9318** (as of 8/30/16)

B. Meetings

- **Mount Cross:** Church Council, 50th Anniversary Committee, Preparations for Wednesday Bible study, Patio Plan.
- **Conference, Ecumenical, Interfaith, other:** Sunday afternoon service at Alma Via, Campus Interfaith Board, trip to Germany.

C. Pastoral Acts:

- Baptisms – 0 (12), Weddings – 0 (0), Funerals – 1 (5)
- Bible Studies, Sunday School classes, etc. Sunday morning: 2 (25), Tuesday morning: 1 (14), Wednesday evening : 1 (7).

D. Special Events:

- Vacation Bible School - including a visit from my close friend, Dunamis (pictured)
- Pilgrimage to Luther's Saxony (8/16-27)
- Annual park service & Picnic

E. Counseling Hours:

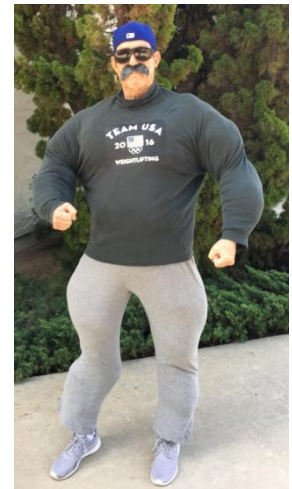
- Pre-marital: 0 (0)
- Pre-baptism: 0 (7)
- Crisis/other: 3 (42).

II. Information & Action Items For Council

1. Stories from the Family Tree. The series concluded with the Wednesday session on August 24 and the Sunday service on August 28. I feel it was well received and well supported. It will continue in the Fall (beginning September 7). Here is the schedule:

- 4:30 p.m. - *Joyful Noise* (Children's Choir) - Luther Hall
- 5:00 p.m. - Fun With Faith (Luther Hall)
- 5:00 p.m. - Adult Bible Study (Parish Life Center). These studies will look at one or more of the readings for the following Sunday.
- 6:00 p.m. - Dinner and conversation for all (on the patio, weather permitting)
- 6:30 p.m. - Confirmation (Parish Life Center)

2. Family of Abraham. This 'summer series' concluded August 14 with a guest speaker from the Islamic Center of the Conejo Valley. I will be discussing with the class their interest in continuing our study of Islam.



3. Germany. My ten days in Luther's Germany were wonderful. To be able to actually touch many of the sites that have been referred to in my teaching about Luther and the Reformation for many years was a special experience. And the commentary added at each location by Bishop Erwin added even more richness to the experience. As I mentioned, I took over 1200 photos, but I'm not going to show them all at once. My idea is to schedule a "Luther Day" each month, with an afternoon and an evening session, unpacking the story of Luther and the start of the Reformation in bite-sized portions throughout the year, leading up to the date we will commemorate the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation, October 20, 2017. [Here](#) is the link to the photo journal I kept while on the trip.

4. Interfaith Harvest. The same group of interfaith colleagues who published the [letter](#) in the January 3, 2016 STAR and who organized the *Family of Abraham Picnic* last spring, organized an interfaith harvest at the Abundant Table here in Camarillo on Labor Day. The event FAR exceeded our expectations, with over 200 people from a wide variety of faith communities working together to pick vegetables for Food Share, weed some of the rows, and engage in creative dialog while standing in the fields. [Here](#) is a nice story that appeared in the STAR on September 6.

5. Feast of Faiths. Speaking of interfaith activities, Mount Cross will host this year's *Feast of Faiths*, jointly sponsored by the Ventura County Interfaith Community and Campus Interfaith. The dinner will gather people from a variety of faith traditions around tables for food and conversation. November 6, beginning at 4:00 p.m.

6. 50th Anniversary. As you can see above, we're nearing the ten thousand mark for our Acts of Service. At this rate we should finish our 50,00 in time for our 54th anniversary. Just kidding. I am very proud of the work that Mount Cross has done toward this awesome goal. I am also looking forward to the final month of our anniversary year with the several special events yet to take place, including the special Movie Theater day (October 2) as well as the big Anniversary Celebration Service on October 23. Thanks to the Committee who has worked ALL YEAR to make this a memorable year and a launching pad for the next 50 years.

7. My dates & activities. Leslie and I will be on vacation September 12-19, including the *Fun and Fellowship Weekend* in Oakhurst and ending with a 'side-trip' to San Jose to see the grandchildren (and their parents, too).

III. DATES:

- September 11 - Rally Day & [God's Work - Our Hands Sunday](#)
- September 16-18 - Fun & Fellowship Weekend in Oakhurst
- October 2 - Movie Theater Sunday - morning services to commemorate our first worship service in a movie theater; 2:00 p.m. matinee in the church
- October 23 - Festival 50th Anniversary service, program, cornerstone placement and luncheon. Bishop Erwin preaching.
- October 30 - Classical Concert, 2 pm
- November 6 - Mount Cross is hosting this year's Feast of Faiths.
- November 8 - Mount Cross will host a youth polling place.

Pastor John W. Soyster
Report for the Church Council meeting, August 9, 2016

I. Activity for July 2016

A. Visitation

- Shut-in/home Communion: 3 (18, year-to-date)
- Member/visitor home visits: 2 (9)
- Hospital/convalescent home/jail visits: 2 (5)
- Telecare calls: 3 (26)
- Stephen Ministry referrals: 0 (0)
- 50,000 Acts of Service: **8786** (as of 8/6/16)

B. Meetings

- **Mount Cross:** Church Council, Executive Committee, 50th Anniversary Committee, Praise Band director.
- **Conference, Ecumenical, Interfaith, other:** Sunday afternoon service at Alma Via, Synod Office (trip to Germany).

C. Pastoral Acts:

- Baptisms – 1 (12), Weddings – 0 (0), Funerals – 1 (4)
- Bible Studies, Sunday School classes, etc. Sunday morning: 4 (23), Tuesday morning: 2 (13), Wednesday evening : 4 (6).

D. Special Events:

- 50th Anniversary Bowling party, Baptism Festival, New Member Orientation.

E. Counseling Hours:

- Pre-marital: 0 (0)
- Pre-baptism: 1 (7)
- Crisis/other: 7 (39).

II. Information & Action Items For Council

1. Stories from the Family Tree. This series continues until August 24. It has been well received and we're planning to continue some of this format into the fall.

2. Family of Abraham. This 'summer series' continues through August 14 (possible the 21st), but there is interest in continuing our study of Islam beyond the summer. We've had two wonderful Jewish guest speakers and will have our first Muslim guest on August 14.

3. My dates & activities. Thanks again for the opportunity to play in the Camarillo Community Band again this summer (my 8th). And thanks to the many Mount Cross folks who came out to listen and support us. The band also played for the California Conservation Corps graduation ceremony on July 13. My study leave starts August 16 with my flight to Berlin and tour of Luther sites (as well as Back and Bonhoeffer). I'll post my itinerary on the church website (<http://www.mountcross.com/meet-the-staff1.html>) And our last vacation dates are September 12-18, ending that week with the group headed to Oakhurst for the *Fun and Fellowship Weekend*.

III. DATES:

- August 28 - Worship & Picnic at Mission Oaks Park
- September 11 - Rally Day & [God's Work - Our Hands Sunday](#)

- September 16-18 - Fun & Fellowship Weekend in Oakhurst
- October 2 - Movie Theater Sunday - morning services to commemorate our first worship service in a movie theater; afternoon matinee in the church
- October 23 - Festival 50th Anniversary service, program, cornerstone placement and luncheon. Bishop Erwin preaching.
- October 30 - Classical Concert, 2 pm
- November 1 - Mount Cross is hosting this year's Feast of Faiths.
- November 8 - Mount Cross will host a youth polling place.

Pastor John W. Soyster
Report for the Church Council meeting, July 14, 2016

I. Activity for June 2016

A. Visitation

- Shut-in/home Communions: 3 (14, year-to-date)
- Member/visitor home visits: 2 (5)
- Hospital/convalescent home/jail visits: 0 (3)
- Telecare calls: 5 (19)
- Stephen Ministry referrals: 0 (0)
- 50,000 Acts of Service: 5766 (as of 5/28/2016)

B. Meetings

- **Mount Cross:** CYFD ('open door policy'), Church staff (usually weekly), Pastor Elizabeth, Church Council, Executive Committee, Worship Survey planning.
- **Conference, Ecumenical, Interfaith, other:** Sunday afternoon service at Alma Via, Leisure Village Bible Study, Ventura County Interfaith Community/Campus Interfaith preplanning for Feasts of Faith.

C. Pastoral Acts:

- Baptisms – 3 (11), Weddings – 0 (0), Funerals – 0 (3)
- Bible Studies, Sunday School classes, etc. Sunday morning: 3 (16), Tuesday morning: 2 (9).

D. Special Events:

- Baptism Reunion (May 15) had 44 attend who had been baptized at Mount Cross (dates ranged from 1981 to 2016)
- Confirmation Reunion (May 22) had 24 attend who had been confirmed at Mount Cross (from 1973 to 2016).
- Classical Concert (May 29)

E. Counseling Hours:

- Pre-marital: 0 (0)
- Pre-baptism: 1 (6)
- Crisis/other: 9 (27).

II. Information & Action Items For Council

1. First Two of Three Reunions (see above). I thought they were days full of good memories and great energy (not to mention the way they pushed our attendance over 200 for the first time since Easter! - Can we have a reunion every week?). I am eagerly looking forward to the Wedding Reunion on June 12. In addition to asking the couples who were married under the auspices of Mount Cross to stand around the altar, I am planning to ask all couples in attendance to stand and I'll do a simple renewal of vows and blessing prayer.

2. Stories from the Family Tree. We're moving ahead with plans for a series of Wednesday afternoon/evening gatherings beginning June 22.

What is this summer's theme? "Stories From the Family Tree." The Bible is full of many exciting and challenging people and stories - all of them part of our faith Family Tree. Maybe you have a favorite Biblical person or story. Or maybe there is a Biblical name or story you keep hearing and wish you knew a bit more.

This summer we will take time to explore a few stories and people more deeply. Our hope is that we all become more familiar with and connected to the Bible's many stories and people. Through the people and stories of the Bible we see God working. But also, in these stories and people we see our own lives and stories and how God is working in our lives as well.

How can I participate? Starting right now, you can **submit a Bible story or character you would like to explore** by completing a short form available in the church narthex or on our website. We will then choose one story or person to focus each week of the summer. We will dig deeper into the story on Sunday morning in worship, but also in a new Wednesday evening gathering for all ages.

What will happen on Wednesday evenings? Each Wednesday evening throughout the summer all ages are invited to come to the church for a **meal and conversation where that week's story or person will be introduced**. A simple meal will be served at 6:00. Additionally, there will be time for all children, youth and adults to explore the weekly theme together. The schedule has two slots for adults (before or after dinner), one for children (before dinner) and one for youth (after dinner). Please see detailed schedule below. Come for as much or as little as you are able!

WHEN: Beginning June 22, and every Wednesday (except August 3) through August 24.

SCHEDULE:

5:00 - 6:00 - Fun With Faith (Pre-School-5th grade) **or** Adult Session I

6:00 - 6:30 - Barbecue Dinner

6:30 - 6:55 - A story from the family tree

6:55 - 7:00 - All-group blessing and sending

7:00 - 8:00 - Youth Group Session (Middle & High School) **or** Adult Session II

THE NEXT SUNDAY: The preacher will use the Wednesday story and conversation to shape the sermon for the following Sunday.

3. My dates.

- Camarillo Community Band: 20 - July 27 - Band rehearsals every Monday & Wednesday night for concerts every Thursday in July, plus the 4th of July fireworks.
- Vacation: July 4-11 and September 12-18.
- **Study leave:** My original dates have changed. I am now going to be gone August 15-27 so that I can go on a "[Pilgrimage to Luther's Saxony.](#)" My flight from Berlin is *supposed* to land on Saturday afternoon, August 27, so I *should* be present, jet lag an all, for the service in the park the following morning.

III. DATES:

- June 2-4 - Synod Assembly, LAX
- June 5 - Choirs Concert Service (8:30); CDC Kindergarten and High School Graduates blessings (10:00)
- June 21 - CDC Summer School begins
- July 16 - Baptism Festival (**new date**)
- August 1-5 - Vacation Bible School
- August 28 - Worship & Picnic in the park
- September 11 - Rally Day & [God's Work - Our Hands Sunday](#)

Pastor John W. Soyster
Report for the Church Council meeting, July 12, 2016

I. Activity for June 2016

A. Visitation

- Shut-in/home Communion: 1 (15, year-to-date)
- Member/visitor home visits: 2 (7)
- Hospital/convalescent home/jail visits: 0 (3)
- Telecare calls: 4 (23)
- Stephen Ministry referrals: 0 (0)
- 50,000 Acts of Service: **7471** (as of 6/28/2016)

B. Meetings

- **Mount Cross:** Meredith & Pastor Elizabeth ('open door policy'), Church staff (usually weekly), Church Council, Executive Committee, Meathed Movers rep., Family Tree Meetings, 50th Anniversary Committee, Sanctuary Design Committee (new banner), Communion Ministers planning.
- **Conference, Ecumenical, Interfaith, other:** Sunday afternoon service at Alma Via, Synod Assembly, visit to Temple Ner Ami to arrange speaker for Summer Series (see below), lunch with the other "P.E." (Pastor Erik).

C. Pastoral Acts:

- Baptisms – 0 (11), Weddings – 0 (0), Funerals – 0 (3)
- Bible Studies, Sunday School classes, etc. Sunday morning: 3 (19), Tuesday morning: 2 (11).

D. Special Events:

- Wedding Reunion (June 12) had about 14 attend who had been married at Mount Cross or by a Mount Cross pastor. Dates ranged from 1984 to 2016)
- Bells & Choir Concert Service

E. Counseling Hours:

- Pre-marital: 0 (0)
- Pre-baptism: 0 (6)
- Crisis/other: 5 (32).

II. Information & Action Items For Council

1. Stories from the Family Tree. As of this writing (7/5) we've had two events and those who planned this are very encouraged by the initial response. The first week there were 23 adults in their session and 17 children for Fun with Faith. After dinner together, another 12 adults were part of the second session as well as about a dozen middle and high schoolers. This will continue through August 24, with one Wednesday dark (August 3) because of Bible school. Just in case you missed it, here's the schedule:

5:00 - 6:00 - Fun With Faith (Pre-School-5th grade) **or** Adult Session I

6:00 - 7:00 - Barbecue Dinner, conversation and Blessing

7:00 - 8:00 - Youth Group Session (Middle & High School) **or** Adult Session II

The Next Sunday: The preacher will use the Wednesday story and conversation to shape the sermon and worship service.

2. Family of Abraham. Hoping to build on the good will of the recent *Family of Abraham* picnic, this summer the Adult Sunday School class is exploring the relationship between Christianity and the other

two faith traditions that look to Abraham as spiritual father: Judaism and Islam. I have succeeded in lining up two guests from the Jewish community here in Camarillo. I am also trying to line up Muslim guests, but may have to settle for 'talking heads' via video.

3. My dates.

- **Camarillo Community Band:** 20 - July 27 - Band rehearsals every Monday & Wednesday night for concerts every Thursday in July, plus the 4th of July fireworks.
- **'Vacation':** July 7-11 and September 12-18.
- **Study leave:** My original dates have changed. I am now going to be gone August 15-27 so that I can go on a ["Pilgrimage to Luther's Saxony."](#) My flight from Berlin is *supposed* to land on Saturday afternoon, August 27, so I *should* be present, jet lag an all, for the service in the park the following morning.

III. DATES:

- July 16 - Baptism Festival (**new date**)
- August 1-5 - Vacation Bible School
- August 28 - Worship & Picnic in the park
- September 11 - Rally Day & [God's Work - Our Hands Sunday](#)
- September 16-18 - Fun & Fellowship Weekend in Oakhurst
- October 2 - Movie Theater Sunday - morning services to commemorate our first worship service in a movie theater; afternoon matinee in the church
- October 23 - Festival 50th Anniversary service, program, cornerstone placement and luncheon. Bishop Erwin preaching.
- October 30 - Classical Concert, 2 pm
- November 1 - Mount Cross is hosting this year's Feast of Faiths.
- November 8 - Mount Cross will host a **youth polling place**. In 1996 Mount Cross invited high school and middle school students to come to a special polling place and cast a mock vote for president. I've made arrangements with the Registrar of Voters to do this again. We'll borrow surplus voting machines and voting booths. We'll host a polling place in the Narthex during the same hours that adults are voting. I'll be looking for youth and adult precinct workers to staff the event, count the ballots and upload the results to a special web page. More details to come.

Pastor John W. Soyster
Report for the Church Council meeting, July 14, 2016

I. Activity for June 2016

A. Visitation

- Shut-in/home Communions: 3 (14, year-to-date)
- Member/visitor home visits: 2 (5)
- Hospital/convalescent home/jail visits: 0 (3)
- Telecare calls: 5 (19)
- Stephen Ministry referrals: 0 (0)
- 50,000 Acts of Service: 5766 (as of 5/28/2016)

B. Meetings

- **Mount Cross:** CYFD ('open door policy'), Church staff (usually weekly), Pastor Elizabeth, Church Council, Executive Committee, Worship Survey planning.
- **Conference, Ecumenical, Interfaith, other:** Sunday afternoon service at Alma Via, Leisure Village Bible Study, Ventura County Interfaith Community/Campus Interfaith preplanning for Feasts of Faith.

C. Pastoral Acts:

- Baptisms – 3 (11), Weddings – 0 (0), Funerals – 0 (3)
- Bible Studies, Sunday School classes, etc. Sunday morning: 3 (16), Tuesday morning: 2 (9).

D. Special Events:

- Baptism Reunion (May 15) had 44 attend who had been baptized at Mount Cross (dates ranged from 1981 to 2016)
- Confirmation Reunion (May 22) had 24 attend who had been confirmed at Mount Cross (from 1973 to 2016).
- Classical Concert (May 29)

E. Counseling Hours:

- Pre-marital: 0 (0)
- Pre-baptism: 1 (6)
- Crisis/other: 9 (27).

II. Information & Action Items For Council

1. First Two of Three Reunions (see above). I thought they were days full of good memories and great energy (not to mention the way they pushed our attendance over 200 for the first time since Easter! - Can we have a reunion every week?). I am eagerly looking forward to the Wedding Reunion on June 12. In addition to asking the couples who were married under the auspices of Mount Cross to stand around the altar, I am planning to ask all couples in attendance to stand and I'll do a simple renewal of vows and blessing prayer.

2. Stories from the Family Tree. We're moving ahead with plans for a series of Wednesday afternoon/evening gatherings beginning June 22.

What is this summer's theme? "Stories From the Family Tree." The Bible is full of many exciting and challenging people and stories - all of them part of our faith Family Tree. Maybe you have a favorite Biblical person or story. Or maybe there is a Biblical name or story you keep hearing and wish you knew a bit more.

This summer we will take time to explore a few stories and people more deeply. Our hope is that we all become more familiar with and connected to the Bible's many stories and people. Through the people and stories of the Bible we see God working. But also, in these stories and people we see our own lives and stories and how God is working in our lives as well.

How can I participate? Starting right now, you can **submit a Bible story or character you would like to explore** by completing a short form available in the church narthex or on our website. We will then choose one story or person to focus each week of the summer. We will dig deeper into the story on Sunday morning in worship, but also in a new Wednesday evening gathering for all ages.

What will happen on Wednesday evenings? Each Wednesday evening throughout the summer all ages are invited to come to the church for a **meal and conversation where that week's story or person will be introduced**. A simple meal will be served at 6:00. Additionally, there will be time for all children, youth and adults to explore the weekly theme together. The schedule has two slots for adults (before or after dinner), one for children (before dinner) and one for youth (after dinner). Please see detailed schedule below. Come for as much or as little as you are able!

WHEN: Beginning June 22, and every Wednesday (except August 3) through August 24.

SCHEDULE:

5:00 - 6:00 - Fun With Faith (Pre-School-5th grade) **or** Adult Session I

6:00 - 6:30 - Barbecue Dinner

6:30 - 6:55 - A story from the family tree

6:55 - 7:00 - All-group blessing and sending

7:00 - 8:00 - Youth Group Session (Middle & High School) **or** Adult Session II

THE NEXT SUNDAY: The preacher will use the Wednesday story and conversation to shape the sermon for the following Sunday.

3. My dates.

- Camarillo Community Band: 20 - July 27 - Band rehearsals every Monday & Wednesday night for concerts every Thursday in July, plus the 4th of July fireworks.
- Vacation: July 4-11 and September 12-18.
- **Study leave:** My original dates have changed. I am now going to be gone August 15-27 so that I can go on a "[Pilgrimage to Luther's Saxony.](#)" My flight from Berlin is *supposed* to land on Saturday afternoon, August 27, so I *should* be present, jet lag an all, for the service in the park the following morning.

III. DATES:

- June 2-4 - Synod Assembly, LAX
- June 5 - Choirs Concert Service (8:30); CDC Kindergarten and High School Graduates blessings (10:00)
- June 21 - CDC Summer School begins
- July 16 - Baptism Festival (**new date**)
- August 1-5 - Vacation Bible School
- August 28 - Worship & Picnic in the park
- September 11 - Rally Day & [God's Work - Our Hands Sunday](#)

Pastor John W. Soyster
Report for the Church Council meeting, June 14, 2016

I. Activity for May 2016

A. Visitation

- Shut-in/home Communion: 3 (14, year-to-date)
- Member/visitor home visits: 2 (5)
- Hospital/convalescent home/jail visits: 0 (3)
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- Stephen Ministry referrals: 0 (0)
- 50,000 Acts of Service: 5766 (as of 5/28/2016)

B. Meetings

- **Mount Cross:** CYFD ('open door policy'), Church staff (usually weekly), Pastor Elizabeth, Church Council, Executive Committee, Worship Survey planning.
- **Conference, Ecumenical, Interfaith, other:** Sunday afternoon service at Alma Via, Leisure Village Bible Study, Ventura County Interfaith Community/Campus Interfaith preplanning for Feasts of Faith.

C. Pastoral Acts:

- Baptisms – 3 (11), Weddings – 0 (0), Funerals – 0 (3)
- Bible Studies, Sunday School classes, etc. Sunday morning: 3 (16), Tuesday morning: 2 (9).

D. Special Events:

- Baptism Reunion (May 15) had 44 attend who had been baptized at Mount Cross (dates ranged from 1981 to 2016)
- Confirmation Reunion (May 22) had 24 attend who had been confirmed at Mount Cross (from 1973 to 2016).
- Classical Concert (May 29)

E. Counseling Hours:

- Pre-marital: 0 (0)
- Pre-baptism: 1 (6)
- Crisis/other: 9 (27).

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WHEN: Beginning June 22, and every Wednesday (except August 3) through August 24.

SCHEDULE:

5:00 - 6:00 - Fun With Faith (Pre-School-5th grade) **or** Adult Session I

6:00 - 6:30 - Barbecue Dinner

6:30 - 6:55 - A story from the family tree

6:55 - 7:00 - All-group blessing and sending

7:00 - 8:00 - Youth Group Session (Middle & High School) **or** Adult Session II

THE NEXT SUNDAY: The preacher will use the Wednesday story and conversation to shape the sermon for the following Sunday.

3. My dates.

- Camarillo Community Band: 20 - July 27 - Band rehearsals every Monday & Wednesday night for concerts every Thursday in July, plus the 4th of July fireworks.
- Vacation: July 4-11 and September 12-18.
- **Study leave:** My original dates have changed. I am now going to be gone August 15-27 so that I can go on a ["Pilgrimage to Luther's Saxony."](#) My flight from Berlin is *supposed* to land on Saturday afternoon, August 27, so I *should* be present, jet lag an all, for the service in the park the following morning.

III. DATES:

- June 2-4 - Synod Assembly, LAX
- June 5 - Choirs Concert Service (8:30); CDC Kindergarten and High School Graduates blessings (10:00)
- June 21 - CDC Summer School begins
- July 16 - Baptism Festival (**new date**)
- August 1-5 - Vacation Bible School
- August 28 - Worship & Picnic in the park
- September 11 - Rally Day & [God's Work - Our Hands Sunday](#)

Pastor John W. Soyster
Report for the Church Council meeting, May 10, 2016

I. Activity for April 2016

A. Visitation

- Shut-in/home Communion: 1 (11, year-to-date)
- Member/visitor home visits: 1 (3)
- Hospital/convalescent home/jail visits: 0 (3)
- Telecare calls: 3 (14)
- Stephen Ministry referrals: 0 (0)
- 50,000 Acts of Service: 4179 (as of 5/5/2016)

B. Meetings

- **Mount Cross:** CYFD ('open door policy'), Church staff (usually weekly), 50th Anniversary Committee, Pastor Elizabeth, Church Council, Executive Committee.
- **Conference, Ecumenical, Interfaith, other:** Conference pastors, Sunday afternoon service at Alma Via, Leisure Village Bible Study, Ventura County Interfaith Community/Campus Interfaith Board.

C. Pastoral Acts:

- Baptisms – 0 (8), Weddings – 0 (0), Funerals – 1 (3)
- Bible Studies, Sunday School classes, etc. Sunday morning: 3 (13), Tuesday morning: 2 (7).

D. Special Events:

- Nice article about our 50th in the [Camarillo Acorn](#) (and a tiny one in the STAR); New Member Orientation & Reception of 7 new members; CDC Spring Sing; Make Bake Celebrate; Sunday worship in the tent and hot dog lunch following.

E. Counseling Hours:

- Pre-marital: 0 (0)
- Pre-baptism: 1 (5)
- Crisis/other: 6 (18).

II. Information & Action Items For Council

- **Thank You, Council!** For all of the fine work you did for the 'after party,' following the Tent Service on April 24. It was again a wonderful fellowship time.
- **Reunions.** I am looking forward to seeing how many people we can lure back to Mount Cross for the three reunions -
 - May 15 - all those baptized at Mount Cross
 - May 22 - all those confirmed at Mount Cross
 - June 12 - all those married at Mount Cross (or by one of Mount Cross' pastors)
- **Interfaith Update.** Those who coordinate the *Feast Of Faiths* tell me there is ample room for us to host the dinner on November 6 and it looks like we can borrow the round tables for this event (and maybe also for the anniversary luncheon). Also, the *Family of Abraham* heads for the fields on Labor Day to pick and prepare crops for Food Share (details as they are available).
- **Stories from the Family Tree.** Most of us know at least one good story about a member of our family. But the further back in time we go, the harder it can be to find someone who still knows the

details of many family stories. And in some cases, when parents or grandparents die, it becomes impossible to recover those stories.

Thanks to the Bible, however, we can still connect with our ancestors in the faith and their interesting stories. Which leads to these questions:

- Which of these Bible stories do you wish you knew better?
- Which of these stories do you wish were more deeply a part of you?
- With which of these stories do you wish you could spend more time?
- Which Bible story do you feel really connects with your own story of life and faith?

Pastor John and Pastor Elizabeth are beginning to put together a summer series for worship around some of these stories. And we'd like your help. Please share with us some of your favorite Bible stories or Bible characters. We'll use your suggestions as we shape a series to deepen our connection with members of our spiritual family, who, though they may be long gone, can still have a powerful influence on us. [More...](#)

- **My dates.**
 - Camarillo Community Band: May 24 rehearsal & May 30 Memorial Day performance. June 20 - July 27 - Band rehearsals every Monday & Wednesday night for concerts every Thursday in July, plus the 4th of July fireworks.
 - Vacation: July 4-11 and September 12-18.
 - **Study leave:** My original dates have changed. I am now going to be gone August 15-27 so that I can go on a ["Pilgrimage to Luther's Saxony."](#) My flight from Berlin is *supposed* to land on Saturday afternoon, August 27, so I *should* be present, jet lag an all, for the service in the park the following morning.

III. DATES:

- May 15 - Baptism Festival and 50th Anniversary Baptism Reunion
- May 22 - Rite of Confirmation (10:00) and 50th Anniversary Confirmation Reunion
- May 29 - Classical Concert, 2 pm
- June 2-4 - Synod Assembly, LAX
- June 5 - Choirs Concert Service (8:30); CDC Kindergarten and High School Graduates blessings (10:00)
- June 21 - CDC Summer School begins
- July 16 - Baptism Festival (**new date**)
- August 1-5 - Vacation Bible School
- August 28 - Worship & Picnic in the park
- September 11 - Rally Day & [God's Work - Our Hands Sunday](#)

Pastor John W. Soyster
Report for the Church Council meeting, March 8, 2016

I. Activity for January & February 2015

A. Visitation

- Shut-in/home Communion: 9 (9, year-to-date)
- Member/visitor home visits: 0 (0)
- Hospital/convalescent home/jail visits: 3 (3)
- Telecare calls: 10 (10)
- Stephen Ministry referrals: 0 (0)
- 50,000 Acts of Service: 2,495 (as of 3/6/2016)

B. Meetings

- **Mount Cross:** (January): Facilities Task Force (2), Executive Committee, CYFD ('open door policy'), Church staff (usually weekly), 50th Anniversary Committee (2), Church Council Listening Post on worship, Mutual Ministry Committee, Adult Ed. Committee, Meredith's annual review, Devin's annual review, Worship & Music Committee, stewardship planning, leadership retreat planning, Facilities presentation, Annual meeting & dinner. (February): Leadership retreat & Council meeting planning, Church Staff, memorial service planning, Leadership Retreat, Church Council, 50th Anniversary Committee, Refugee Sunday planning,
- **Conference, Ecumenical, Interfaith, other:** (January): Conference pastors, Sunday afternoon service at Alma Via, Leisure Village Bible Study, Breakfast for the City Center in Ventura. (February): Leisure Village Bible Study, Bishop's Colloquy.

C. Pastoral Acts:

- Baptisms – 3 (3), Weddings – 0 (0), Funerals – 2 (2)
- Bible Studies, Sunday School classes, etc. Sunday morning: 7 (7), Tuesday morning: 3 (3),

D. Special Events:

- (January): Classical Concert. (February): Joint Ash Wednesday service with St. Columba's Episcopal Church, start of midweek supper and worship series for Lent (Praying with Jesus), First Communion workshop.

E. Counseling Hours:

- Pre-marital: 0 (0)
- Pre-baptism: 1 (1)
- Crisis/other: 9 (9).

II. Information & Action Items For Council

- **Interfaith Work.** The 2nd outcome of the interfaith meeting I hosted in December will be the *Family of Abraham Picnic* this coming Saturday in Thousand Oaks. I'll also be on an interfaith panel on March 17, 7:30 p.m. at the Mormon church on Paseo Camarillo. Topic: "*What Does God Say?*"
- **Pastoral Staff Assistant.** I am happy to continue to announce that Pastor Elizabeth Nees has begun work. She attended 3D last Friday and assisted in worship last Sunday. We will meet on a regular basis. As is outlined in her employment agreement, she will be with us for worship most Sundays, but when she's needed as a supply pastor elsewhere in the Synod, she will be absent *with our blessing*.
- **ETC.** Thanks for time away to be away for our annual Anniversary vacation in February. Future dates: Summer vacation - July 4-11, Study leave - August 8-21, Fall vacation - October 3-9. Also,

I'm performing an *Act of Service* by filling in an empty chair in the Pepperdine Wind Ensemble's clarinet section. Performance is April 21.

III. DATES & NOTES:

- March 12 - Family of Abraham Picnic, Noon till 4
- March 19 - Memorial Service for Chance Fairchild, 1 pm
- March 20 - Palm Sunday
- March 20 - Classical Concert - Young Artists, 2 pm (free!)
- March 24 - Maundy Thursday Service, 7 pm
- March 25 - Good Friday Service - 7 pm
- March 26 - Easter Vigil & Baptism Festival, 7 pm
- March 27 - Easter Sunday - Worship at **8, 9:30 and 11 am**
- April 17 - CDC Spring Sing, 2 pm
- April 22-24 - **Tent Weekend**
 - Kid's Movie night in the tent on Friday
 - Make Bake Celebrate on Saturday
 - Worship in the tent, with lunch following, on Sunday

Pastor John W. Soyster
Report for the Church Council meeting, January 12, 2016

I. Activity for December 2015

A. Visitation

- Shut-in/home Communion: 19 (39, year-to-date)
- Member/visitor home visits: 1 (13)
- Hospital/convalescent home/jail visits: 0 (35)
- Telecare calls: 2 (53)
- Stephen Ministry referrals: 0 (3)
- 50,000 Acts of Service: 1001 (as of 12/29/2015)

B. Meetings

- **Mount Cross:** Executive Committee, Exec. & Budget Committee combined, CYFD ('open door policy'), Church staff (usually weekly), stewardship tally with Jenny, Annual reviews: Jayne & Guy (Devin, Sheri & Meredith still tba).
- **Conference, Ecumenical, Interfaith, other:** Conference Young Adult Ministry interview, Conference pastors, Sunday afternoon service at Alma Via, Leisure Village Bible Study Christmas luncheon, Campus Interfaith/Ventura County Interfaith Community, City Scene taping (for Classical Concert).

C. Pastoral Acts:

- Baptisms – 0 (7), Weddings – 0 (2), Funerals – 1 (9)
- Bible Studies, Sunday School classes, etc. Sunday morning: 3 (22), Tuesday morning: 2 (23), Special Advent series 6 (8)

D. Special Events:

- Led 3-D, Christmas Concert, Sunday School Christmas Program, CDC Christmas gathering, Confirmation Caroling (10 homes), Stephen Ministry annual Christmas reunion, Christmas Eve worship services (3).

E. Counseling Hours:

- Pre-marital: 0 (3)
- Pre-baptism: 0 (9)
- Crisis/other: 1 (61).

II. Information & Action Items For Council

• **ETC.**

Thanks for time away to...

- ...play in the Camarillo Community Band's annual Christmas Concert on December 13,
- ...fly to Michigan for a family wedding on January 2,
- ...be away for our annual Anniversary vacation (not 50 - 16), February 11-16,
- ...and be away for other vacation and study leave times - dates to be announced. this coming

I'd also like to brag about my daughter, Rachel, who graduated from the Moorpark College nursing school on December 17. She was co-president of her class and gave a fabulous commencement address. Pray for her as she studies for and takes her board exams so she can actually work as a nurse.

- **Interfaith Work.** In case you missed it, the column that was signed by me as well as three other religious leaders and that appeared in Sunday's Ventura County STAR can be read [here](#).

- **Right Now Media Update.** Active contacts: July = 54; August = 71; September = 74; October = 74; November = 74; December 74. We used a RightNow Media Bible study video for our four week Advent Bible study series called [A Savior Is Born](#). I led the morning and afternoon sessions; Denise Sobolik led the evening sessions. Here are the attendance figures:

Date	8:40 a.m.	1:00 p.m.	7 p.m.
11/30	4	9	2
12/7	6	7	4
12/14	5	8	4
12/21	7	8	4
Total/Session	22	32	14
Average/Session	5.5	8	3.5
Total attendance for series	68		
Weekly average for series	17		

- **Letter Writing Project.** One of my anniversary year goals is to write a personal letter to as many Mount Cross folks as possible. In some cases, these will be thank you letters, with appreciation for the ways they have supported, participated, shared, worked, given, etc. But in some cases, these letters will include “*I’ve missed seeing you*” and “*Where have you been?*” These latter will also include an invitation to be in conversation about whatever issue it is that has kept them away. The goal will be to enter 2017 with a membership fully re-gathered and recharged to be God’s people in Camarillo. The first of these (and it was an “I’ve missed you” letter) went in the mail on January 5. And I will probably work on the “I’ve missed you” list first; saving the “I appreciate you” letters for later in the year.
- **Pastoral Staff Assistant.** I am encouraged by the Council’s commitment to adding a 10 hour a week person to assist with a few things. I am overwhelmed by the generosity of Denise Sobolik and the way she is paying tribute to her parent’s memory by funding this position for the first year. Based on an average of 10 hours/week for 48 weeks of the year, here is a *first draft* of what I see the position including:
 - Serve as pastoral resource person for the 3D Community. Assist with and attend their monthly events and develop relationships. [54 hrs/year]*
 - Assist with hospital visitation. [96 hrs/year]
 - Become part of the Communion Minister team - developing relationships with home-bound members and their families. [50 hrs/year]
 - Preach and lead worship on the Sunday’s when Pastor John is on vacation or on study leave (this will likely be a total of 5 Sundays in 2016). [60 hrs/year]
 - Be on call for pastoral care emergencies when Pastor John is on vacation or on study leave. [50 hrs/year]
 - Assist Mount Cross by teaching (or by whatever means appropriate) to improve how we live out the **Outreach** portion of our Core Value **Compassionate Outreach**. I believe our compassion work is in good shape (Many Meals, Habitat, Food Pantry, Habitat, Gifts of Hope, etc., etc.). But we could use a boost in gaining confidence in crossing bridges of relationship that already exist and be more assertive in our welcoming. [170 hrs/year]
 - Assist Mount Cross in other ways as the needs are discovered as the gifts of the Assistant and hours available permit.

As we know from previous experience, job descriptions flex to meet the gifts and skills of the person who seems best suited for the position. With this in mind, I hope someone will make a motion to approve the basic outline of the position as a one year contract and, in the same or a separate motion, give me the authority to find a candidate whom I believe best suited, which candidate I will bring for Council approval.

* As some of these activities are occasional or fluctuate, it seemed easier to calculate them out to an average of hours per year. 10 hours/week x 48 weeks = 480 hrs/year.

III. DATES & NOTES:

- January 10 - Baptism Festival
- January 10 - Church Council Listening Post - worship schedule concerns
- January ? (tba) - Mutual Ministry Committee
- January ? (tba) - Facilities Task Force
- January 31 - Annual Meeting (preceded by Facilities presentation, followed by dinner)
- February 6 - Leadership Retreat @ Mount Cross; 8:30 a.m.
- February 10 - Joint Ash Wednesday service with St. Columba's (at Mount Cross), 7 pm
- February 11-16 - Our annual anniversary vacation.
- February 21 - Thrivent Action Team training events - after both worship services