

As 2024 comes to a close, I look back and remember that at the end of 2023 we were receiving the news on our Holy Cow church survey results. As a reminder here are the truths that we learned about ourselves and strived to live into this past year. We learned that: Our church does a good job supporting persons in ministry by reminding them that they are making a difference. We are willing to adapt our worship to the needs and circumstances of the people we want to reach in our local community. The worship services at our church are exceptional in both quality and spiritual content. Our church prepares our members for ministry by helping them discern their gifts. A friendly atmosphere prevails among the members of our church. We discovered that things you were wanting us to work on were: Make necessary changes to attract families with children and youth to our church. Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church. Provide more opportunities for Christian education and spiritual formation at every age and stage of life. Work to renew and revitalize the community around the church by building coalitions with partners that share this vision and commitment.

I look at these learnings and the subsequent goals and give thanks for you.

As I finish my fifth year serving God with you, I am grateful for the ways that we have paid attention to the needs and desires of our church and live into the future with gratitude and hope.

Our session, deacons, trustees, Sunday School teachers, and the music & worship team pour their energy, ideas, gifts, and love for this church into everything they do on a daily and weekly basis. Volunteers show up throughout each week and offer their gift of mission through things needed in the building to activities of care for church members and community friends. Fred works at keeping our space clean. Shanna works tirelessly to keep our communications up to date and our worship team organized. As you read everyone's reports in this packet, let us offer thanks for the blessings of God and the way the ministry of all believers is lived out at Denton.

Sunday worship continues to meet both in person and on Zoom. I give thanks for the dedicated worship, sound, and tech team that crafts and offers the worship experience together as a gift to God week after week. I appreciate the welcome and support the new liturgists and vocalists have received as they have stepped in to lead with the team. Our monthly average attendance over this last year has been 54 people each week. Some of our special worship offerings included: Thanksgiving service, Advent candle lighting, a Blue Christmas service, All Church Christmas Pageant, Christmas Eve, Star Words, Hoving Home visit, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, two Easter services, All Saints Day, Faith Sharing Sunday, and L.I.F.T. worship on the 5th Sunday. We offered the sacrament of baptism to Gabi Cosh and Grace Albrecht. We received into membership Deb Scott, Cody and Heather Albrecht, and JR Morse. We gave witness to the resurrection as we offered funerals for Terry Wickham, Helen Lippert, Marjorie Tillotson. I offered funerals for community members and family or friends of the church for Marjorie Tillotson, Karl Doderer, Jake Collins, and Art Grebeldinger.

We continue to offer opportunities for prayer and study throughout the week. On Wednesday, prayer and bible study meets twice. We have the option of meeting at 10am at church in Lippert Hall or at 7pm on Zoom. You are always welcome to drop in to any session or alternate day time one week and evening time the next. Our discussions are thoughtful and our walk with God deepened. We added this year a seasonal book discussion. I offered a selection of books on a particular topic during Lent, the summer, and this fall.

Individuals chose books to read and gathered at a set time to share what we learned with one another. I plan to offer one for Advent too.

Sunday School and VBS are ministries that are a foundational part of our children's lives. I am thankful for our continued offerings for our youngest members. I appreciate the dedication of Anna Rose Hamilton, Barbara Morse, and Ashley Hamilton for leading these endeavors. Your dedication and love to the spiritual formation of and community building for our children is much appreciated.

Along with our activities of ministry and fellowship, I give thanks for the work we are doing on our church manual as we strive to order how we do our day to day, week to week, and month to month activities. It is necessary work.

As a church, we continue to foster relationships in our surrounding community. I am currently a member of the Greater Middletown Interfaith Council. We meet monthly to discuss the needs of our community and support local missions. Our Park Manor ministry team offers worship to the residents at Park Manor on the first and third Sunday of the month. We have a consistent congregation of 10-15 people. I have offered worship at the Hoving Home with the help of Linda Driscoll, Karen Romain, and Jane Sanok for their mid-week chapel services twice this past year, attended the Gideon's breakfast in September with Linda Driscoll, and continue to support the Al-anon group that meets at Denton every Tuesday. I have supported a New Hampton family with supervised visits for a parent and child once a week since April. We have the joyous addition of the L'Eglise de Assemblée de Promesse (Assembly of Promise Church) worshipping in our building on Friday mornings from 9am-12pm and Sunday afternoons from 4pm-7pm. They are a Haitian Pentecostal Church that are thrilled to once again have a physical place to meet, worship, and pray together.

Serving the greater church through activities in the Hudson River Presbytery is a pleasure and an honor. I served as moderator for the Council of Presbytery this past year as the final year responsibility of my term as moderator of presbytery. I continue to serve on the presbytery grants committee reviewing ministry initiatives throughout our presbytery. I have been active on the presbytery racial justice team as we develop and provide training throughout our region. I am currently serving as the transition representative for Otisville as they search for their new pastor. Once a month the Presbyterian clergy from Orange county meet for lunch for support and the sharing of ideas. I also have had the pleasure of offering a workshop at the Presbytery's clergy retreat on balance of Spirit and Schedule.

Thank you for the opportunity to travel to Salt Lake City, UT this summer to serve as a representative of Hudson River Presbytery and Denton at the General Assembly gathering of the PCUSA. It was an experience I will never forget as I gained a wider appreciation of our denomination as a whole through polity, discussions, and live giving worship as we discerned and voted on the topics before us as a greater church body.

I appreciate the continuing education opportunities that you grant me in my terms of call. I continue to be engaged with the Backstory Preaching community. Their gatherings all occur online over Zoom. It is such a pleasure to be "in the room" with notable authors and theologians along with pastors from across the world. That community has been essential to my ongoing education and sermon study. I also attended workshops focused on digital ministry, small church ministry, and the non-profit/financial management of churches. I thank you for the time and the resources that made these things possible.

Blessings,
Pastor Dorinda