

Report to Congregation Council
May 14, 2024

Christ is risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia! As we wind down the season of Easter and enter the long season of Ordinary Time, what we refer to as the Sundays after Pentecost, I'm taking every opportunity possible to remind others of the resurrection to new life while it's still "in season" (not that it ever goes out of season!).

This past month, which included the normal activities and agenda items (visits with members, homebound, and hospitalized; committee meetings; office and administrative duties, Bible study) also included what seemed like more one-off and unusual activities. For example, four of us from St. Matthew attended the *Isaiah 43 Project* meeting at Bethesda on the Bay Lutheran Church on Sunday, May 5. This "exploration of ministry and the future of the Church" is being led by the Synod Staff. Stemming from this meeting, I also ended up attending a meeting with most of the Medina County pastors to discuss the possibility and functionality of collaborative ministries. There is both anxiety and excitement within many of the smaller, struggling congregations of our Synod, as we hold these discussions of the Church and what God is doing in our midst. Part of the Synod Gathering coming up on June 1 will be to continue these discussions.

A few other "one-off" items that happened this month included meeting with the Schontz Organ Company to obtain another quote and assessment of our organ; a special meeting with a representative of the Mission Investment Fund to hear what they might have to offer us as a congregation as we continue discussions of renovating the facility; a meeting with the Federal and State of Ohio Homeland Security specialists to discuss and assess church safety practices (specially for St. Matthew); class time with six of our young people in preparation to receive their first Holy Communion; and work with a special committee to create (and finish) a Leadership Handbook, which will benefit current and future leaders in the various roles. I also spent 2 hours in continuing education for required preparation as a leader at the ELCA Youth Gathering.

A couple of highlights for "worship" this month include my presiding for the marriage of Ashley (Musil) and Jason Lyday on May 4 in Hilliard, Ohio. Ashley is Deb's (office administrator) oldest daughter. It was a joy and privilege to be asked to officiate for their special day. Additionally, our High School Youth lead us in worship this past Sunday (Mother's Day), and in my opinion did a phenomenal job! It was a joy to have them share their gifts with the congregation. A special word of thanks goes out to the Praise Team for working with them and including them within the group.

As I look ahead to next month, prior to our next meeting, I will be enjoying my first week of vacation for the year June 10 through June 16.

In Christ, with Christ, for Christ!

Rev. Steven M. Mahaffey