

Report to Congregation Council
April 18, 2023

Christ has risen ... and I've collapsed! That's always how I (and most rostered leaders) feel post Lent and Easter. For the first time in my 20 years of ministry I chose to take the week off following Holy Week. Although I was eventually able to feel a little "rested," it took most of the week to get there. Part of that delay, I believe, was that my "vacation" turned into a "stay-cation." I was originally going to get out of town and bicycle the Outer Banks with a buddy of mine, but he cancelled somewhat at the last minute due to a family issue. Although I was still able to log some miles on the bicycle, it wasn't the same. At least I had gorgeous weather!

I would like to remind everyone that when I'm off on vacation I don't respond to emails or text messages, unless for emergencies (i.e., a death or emergency hospitalization). Think of vacation as a string of "sabbaths." I understand that I'm accessible 24/7 (that's why I provide my cell). And while I appreciate your well-wishes and the fact that you're thinking of me, because I'm accessible 24/7 when I'm not on vacation, it's nice to not have that "pressure" of being connected when I'm on one. It's not that I'm still not thinking about or praying for everyone ... it's just that I have the same need that every person has of needing to get-way and re-set. I will respond to your emails once I return ... but please try your best to not text or call unless it's an absolute emergency. Thank you for respecting and honoring this healthy boundary.

Lent and Holy Week were full of powerful and moving worship experiences. Many people have shared how much they enjoyed the weekly drama on Wednesdays, as well as the different soups that were shared each week. Thanks to everyone involved in helping Lent to "feel" how it felt. Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services were also moving, both in their different and special ways. Again, people have commented on how much they enjoyed the Tenebrae service on Good Friday this year. Overall attendance throughout all of Lent and into Holy Week was strong. Easter, as hoped for, was on another level ... 128 and 174 at each service! Not quite at the point where we need to add a third service, but we can hope we get there at some point!

Added to Holy Week was the opportunity for me to gather with my colleagues in the NEOS to renew my vows to ministry. We gathered at Trinity Lutheran in Kent for worship and had a blessing of oil (chrism) service to be used for anointing purposes. It was a great opportunity to connect with colleagues and worship (instead of "leading" worship). Later that same evening I hosted the Mutual Ministry Team at my house. This was our first time coming together as a team, and everyone affirmed the importance of being intentional about "walking together" in ministry.

I was blessed and honored to preside this month at the wedding of Deacon Lindsay and her spouse Austin. It was most definitely the highlight of the month for me!

In Christ, with Christ, for Christ!

Pastor Steve