

Report to Congregation Council
April 15, 2025

I'm sitting here in my office on Monday of Holy Week writing this report while reflecting on the importance of this week in the life of Christians the world over. Many of us will gather together for worship three times in the matter of four days. The story will start with Jesus washing his disciple's feet, thru the Last Supper and betrayal, to the cross of Good Friday, sitting in the silence/uncertainties/questions of Holy Saturday, and into the sheer shocking surprise and joy of the empty tomb. This is THE WEEK that forms our faith in Jesus and informs us as followers of the risen Christ.

So, it feels a little insignificant to report on what took place in my ministry last month. Certainly, it was important ... but it pales in significance of this week as we walk together through the Passion of our Lord. Nevertheless, here's a run-down of the month: The Eccumenical Lenten study with St. Paul's Episcopal and Medina UCC met four times during this period. People in attendance continue to reiterate how much they enjoy our getting together during Lent, and how much they've enjoyed the last 2 years of study using Dr. AJ Levine materials. The colleagues and I will be meeting again after Easter to process this year's study as well as share ideas for next year.

We worshipped and then met together as one body on the 30th for a Special Congregation Meeting. The point of the meeting was to discuss the percentage allotments of the Promise Place Funds. The breakdown was approved.

Two evenings I had Synod zoom meetings to attend. The first was with the ELCA representatives for the Churchwide Gathering coming up in July. It included instructions for making travel arrangements, hotel stay, and meeting specifics. As I've shared previously, I was elected at the last Synod Gathering to serve as a clergy representative for our Synod. I'm very excited to attend this, as it will be my first time. The second Zoom meeting was with the Bishop and Pastor Mitch, as they unveiled various committees they are forming. I've been asked to serve on a committee pertaining to "continuing education" opportunities. It's just forming, so I don't have any specifics to share yet.

Two of our members entered the Church Triumphant. We held a celebration of life for Karen Strange on March 29 and for Shannon Barnes on April 11. Both families were very appreciative of the support and efforts that many of our membership made, from the worship service to the fellowship luncheon afterwards. I appreciate the many hands that go into planning and orchestrating a funeral here at St. Matthew!

I attended Whirley Ball with the Luther League on Sunday the 6th (and had a BLAST). I also attended the high school musical "Curtains" on the 13th, in which we had three St. Matthew youth and 1 young adult participating.

The annual Synod Blessing of Oils and Renewal of Ordination Vows service was on Tuesday the 15th in Kent. This is a long tradition held in the NEOS during Holy Week, and

makes for a nice way for clergy to worship together before leading worship all weekend. I attended the usual number of meetings by the various committees that meet monthly, as well as continued to gather Thursday evenings to lead Bible & Brews.

Lastly, it's great to welcome my colleague and friend, Deacon Lindsay back after her six months away from ministry. I'm excited to see where this next chapter of ministry together takes us, as well as to watch her daughter Ellison grow in size and faith! I'm thankful for the people that helped to cover some of what she does in her ministry, and to the staff as we pulled together while she was away. I know we're all happy to have her back with us!

In Christ, with Christ, for Christ!

Pastor Steve Mahaffey