

## Lead Pastor February 2023 Report

In the bleak midwinter – that’s how every February feels to me. We are usually, at least for part of the month, in that in between time of Epiphany...Christmas is over and put away, but we haven’t gotten to Lent quite yet. There is a lot of planning to do and looking back at last year as well as we gather ourselves after the holidays are done and gone. It’s a strange, bleak time of the year to be sure.

February for me wasn’t all bleak, but it was busy. The month started with a very large funeral for a member whose loss hit a lot of people hard. (Steve Shearer) It was a gift to celebrate his life, but at the same time, with so many funerals for me in the last few years, it was a hard day to say goodbye to someone that I have come to know well in my long time here. This congregation is truly a gift to me and each time I have to do these things it hurts a little more. I’m sure we all feel this way about someone.

It seems that there were a lot of meetings in February, but some of them were because we are moving forward with both our interview process for Children and Youth Director and with KD3 architects in the renovation process. Both of these are exciting things in the life of our church and show us that there is always more to come! We will hopefully be able to recommend someone to hire to the council in the near future and move on with bringing someone new onto our staff. The renovation team will be meeting with KD3 on the 20<sup>th</sup> of this month to officially begin their work.

Another factor in feeling like I had lots of meetings was helping The Children’s Garden with some staffing issues and meeting to plan together for Lent and upcoming activities.

I spent 2 days in Philadelphia at Lead Pastor Development. We focused this month on governance, especially looking at constitutions and policies of the church. As much as it is not my favorite kind of work, we do need to do some updating of our constitution as well as put some policies into writing so that those who come after us are better equipped to know and lead our church. I know that the reality is is that we have policies, but many of them are only known through knowing our history and St. John’s will not always have a pastor that has been around for 15 years.

Finally, we began Lent together on Ash Wednesday (Feb 22). Worship that night felt like one of the closest gatherings we have had to precovid in a long time. We were able to come together as one worshipping body and begin a journey to the cross together. What a gift it was and I hope that many of you were there for it!

### Things to ponder:

1. What questions about St. John’s do you think that a first time visitor might have that we could help answer? What questions do you have as someone who has been a member for X amount of years?
2. Have you joined us for a Word of Life Wednesday in a while? Why or why not? How can we be better at welcoming those who are coming in our doors?
3. What gifts are needed in someone to help us raise money for the renovation? We aren’t too many steps away from presenting something to the congregation and then (hopefully) diving right in...so what do we do to be ready for that?