

Pastor Sarah August 2023

Meetings, meetings, and more meetings! That's what August felt like. Lots of planning and walking together to get ready for the fall and what is to come. Our calendar is very full and we are excited for all the ministry opportunities that are to come.

So what is to come? We will be sharing the plans for the renovation with the congregation beginning the 17<sup>th</sup>. Please take time to look at the drawings and give your comments as well. This isn't a vote, but it is important to get feedback and know that we are headed in the right direction. Please encourage others to give feedback as well!

Sunday School will be up and running by the time you read this – did you go to Sunday School this week? What's stopping you? We really do have a wonderful ministry in this – please try to take part if you can!

Where are we at as a congregation? This has been the question on my heart and mind a lot – how do we compare and how do we actually judge all this? It's easy to compare us to other churches around us, and when we do, we are actually doing well. We are holding our own. We have had a lot of visitors this summer, many who have come back several times. We hope to see them continue and perhaps join us in ministry. We are growing the ministries that we do have and we are able to see new things on the horizon. We are holding our own and doing well.

Then I look at other things – our finances are hurting a bit, and part of that is just repairs that are larger than expected and expenses going up faster than we had hoped. I do think we need to better communicate this to the congregation so that they know our needs for doing the work of the church. How can we encourage members to increase their giving, even if only by a little bit? I'll ask you all since you are leaders of the congregation - when did you last increase your giving? It is very easy to just give the same amount from year to year and forget about it – but expenses go up for the church just as they do for your home. How can we communicate this to the congregation?

Things to ponder in our life together:

How do we reach out to visitors that come to us and help them to feel connected to our church?  
What would make you want to come back?

How would you want to know about church finances? The annual meeting isn't enough – what would give you the information you need?

Why do you serve on council? Because the pastor asked you to? Guilt? Needed a hobby? What makes you want to serve the church in this way?