

Pastor's Annual Report

Dear Friends,

The year 2021 will likely be a year that is forgotten. I suspect that over time 2021 and 2020 will merge in our memory as that difficult Covid time that changed so many of our routines. While we at Freedom Plains United can be thankful for our adaptation, I imagine I am not the only one looking forward to better days ahead. There are so many people I miss seeing, and I'm sure I'm not the only one.

One thing we need to remember from this past year is the congregational assessment we did. The executive summary is attached and I invite you to read it when you have a chance. We will be following up on the learnings in the coming year(s). The bottom line is that we are a congregation with above average satisfaction, and above average energy that should enable us to adapt and change to meet God's call in this present time and place. Our top priorities are:

1. To make necessary changes to attract families with children and youth
2. To develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church.

These priorities are most congregations top priorities. What makes us different is that we have the resources, the disposition and the energy to do something about it. I hope you will find ways to support and encourage the important work the church finds itself doing in the year(s) ahead.

Lastly, there is a very long list of people to thank as we look back on 2021, for we were able to continue vibrant worship, some impressive mission work, and supportive pastoral care. Our Elders and Deacons adapted and lead the congregation through a difficult year. We are blessed with so many talented and committed leaders. Among them are Susan Conrad our Clerk of Session and Lou Biskup our Treasurer and Gerry Defigio our Assistant Treasurer. Our staff has also adjusted and worked to keep things running smooth. I continue to feel blessed to work with Rev. Heather Finck. It has been said by some of you that together we make a good team and I certainly agree. Cheryl Haight in the office, Bonnie Biskup our Parish Nurse, Kevin Coyne our Sexton need to be thanked for all their work. We are blessed to have such people sharing their talents and dedication to our church. We also need to recognize some transitions as well. We said good bye in 2021 to Lorraine Nelson Wolf our beloved Music Director, who has left to become the music director of a congregation much closer to her home in Hudson. Her 5 plus year ministry with us blessed this congregation in so many ways. We also had to say good bye to Lorraine's husband Godfrey Nelson who helped us set up and then ran our live stream service that is one of the best in quality around. And lastly we said goodbye to our seminarian Katrina Zezza. Perhaps you did not know, but Katrina was so very helpful in our website design, and communication strategy in this pandemic time. We wish her much success in continued service as she pursues her calling.

One of the things I love about this church is that when there is a need someone steps up. It has happened in service often during this time of pandemic. When we need one more person to pass the offering plate, one, two, or sometimes even three people start to rise. We give thanks for Diane Wassick and Christine Lent who have stepped up in this time of transition in our music program to help and support and continue our important music ministry.

I end my 2021 pastoral report by asking you to think about and pray about how God might be calling you to step up and support and nurture and serve our mission and ministry here at Freedom Plains United in the coming year(s).

Blessings,

Rev. Paul D. Lent