

Pastor's Report
Annual Meeting
January 17, 2021

I have to confess that I am still not sure how to report on 2020. What can I say about this crazy year? I guess I would like to start by reporting on what has been good about 2020.

Most preachers, myself included, have been saying for years that the church is not the building. I know that most of us nod our heads in agreement, understanding the fact that it is the people who make up the church. However, most of us have never before experienced the reality that church is the people, not the building. That changed this year. Without our building, we continued to worship. We continued to give and to serve. We continued to support one another through good times and bad. We continued to be “beloved community.”

The following is just a snapshot of what we accomplished in 2020. We sold the dirt parking lot, removing the liability and financial burden of repairing a large and crumbling retaining wall. Many of us learned for the first time how to use and interact on the video conferencing app, Zoom. We agreed upon and scheduled significant repairs to our building (two doors downstairs). We responded to increased food insecurity in our community through unprecedented giving to CoNSERNS-U. In fact, giving was up overall in 2020, which was very helpful in enabling the church to access the equipment and programs needed to embrace online ministry.

None of this changes the fact that 2020 was a very hard year. I miss seeing everyone (in person) on Sunday mornings. I really missed our annual summer service in the park and the Blessing of the Animals that we usually celebrate with Journey UCC. I miss seeing our youth gather and grow in faith together. I missed our Lenten services and lunches.

None of 2020 was expected. We experienced hardships, and we found blessings. Through it all, we remained in community. We all know that things will not magically go back to “normal” just because we have turned a page on a calendar. Things may never entirely go back to the old “normal” again, but we know that we are stronger. We know that our church does not just survive; it thrives. The Holy Spirit is at work in our midst. We will continue to listen and follow.

Excited to see what God will do next.

Rev. Barbara Toll