

Pastor's Report
January 2022

December 2021 was a phenomenal month of ministry in every way imaginable. The generosity of sharing time, talent and treasure at MCC Richmond continues to be an over-the-top blessing. In the time I have served as pastor of this spiritual community, this December we experienced more people involved in various ministries than ever before. What is striking is the way people work together to accomplish a common goal. At times, personalities and tempers flared up but with a little direction, encouragement, and tender loving ... *take a deep breath, calm down, and/or take a break* ... care we get back on track and all is well. This is what it means to a caring community and to *Love God by caring for and serving others!*

Between December 17, 2021 and January 13, 2022 I have engaged in 18 pastoral counseling appointments, 5 Zoom meetings with community leaders, 4 breakfast or lunch meetings with church members, 1 Zoom meeting with UFMCC staff, 4 meetings with visitors/newbies from the virtual service, 6 meetings with staff and ministry leaders.

This Christmas Season MCC Richmond provided gifts for 31 children. Every child received what they asked for and have anonymously expressed their thanks for the gifts. It was wonderful to see the gifts bagged up and ready to be picked up by their parent. It was a double blessing to see the parent arrive and watch their eyes gleam with appreciation and excitement to receive the gifts. Our Christmas Outreach also provided assistance to 12 families through the Good Neighbor Fund.

The Vicky Hester Food Pantry is receiving record number of donations, volunteers, and people receiving assistance. This month the Daily Planet Mobile Medical Unit will begin coming on the 1st Thursday to provide COVID vaccines, HIV screening/test, and high blood pressure checks. The Virginia Department of Health will be sending their Public Health nurse on the 3rd Thursday of the month providing a litany of health needs and supplies. It's great having this kind of community partnership and support.

When we lost our Wednesday evening Bread Ministry volunteers, I put out a plea for volunteers or we would have had to stop receiving pastries and bread from Panera on Wednesday evenings. MJ Simmons, Mike Everhart, Michael Braun, Lydia Melton, Sally Watkinson, Emma and Mitch Johnson have volunteered, have been trained, and are now part of the Bread Ministry and doing a fantastic job. We now have enough volunteers to not only cover Wednesdays but to also help on Mondays. Volunteers are serving two nights a month.

Donations to the Capital Campaign, Vicky Hester Food Pantry, Ceiling and Carpet Fund in December totaled \$53,344.38. This amount of money clearly tells us the passions of the congregation ... outreach and taking care of our buildings so they can be used as a resource for the community. We are blessed to be a blessing. May we never forget this truth.

The Social Media Team has successfully transitioned to using YouTube to stream Sunday worship. Facebook became too difficult and frustrating because they frequently change their systems and platform requirements without notice. We have also had the internet hard-wired a Verizon Extender instead of using a wireless internet connection. This appears to make a tremendous help in having internet accessibility and connection. A new sound system has been purchased and installed to make recording the sound of the worship service possible and a tremendous benefit. We are also beginning to stream earlier on Sunday morning so the virtual audience is able to see and hear what's going on in the sanctuary ... and people LOVE that!

A rebuilt laptop has been purchased for Calvin the work remotely. Calvin continues to serve our spiritual community well and do a fantastic job. This month he has started to complete tasks on-site which is a tremendous support to me. This kind of flexibility and staff support is working well for us and continues to be a blessing.

Rev. Georgia is doing a fantastic job discerning her ministry, dreaming up, and developing appropriate ministry goals and activities for the congregation. A new Prayer Station and Prayer Hot Line will be launched this month. Next month she will offer a Prayer Class and more. I'm thrilled to see her embrace this new ministry effectively and with grace.

Ginny continues to select excellent music to support the Sunday worship theme. It is not unusual for people to comment how the service was "*tight*" and consistently engaging. I love these kinds of comments because they communicate the value and effectiveness of the worship service. The Spirits of Joy add so much to our worship experience. It's wonderful that they not only provide a strong ministry at worship, but they also care for and serve each other. Their authenticity and love of ministry shows this each and every Sunday.

MCC Richmond serves with an attitude of abundance in everything we do with a strong emphasis on outreach and welcoming others. The beauty of the way we do ministry is that we care greatly about those within the congregation with heavy dose of internal and external ministry. The truth is: it doesn't get much better than this! It is such a blessing to witness the quality, authentic, and loving ministry activity. We are blessed to serve as elected leaders of this amazing spiritual community.

With gratitude and thanksgiving,

-Pastor Kenny Callaghan