

SENIOR PASTOR REPORT

REV. DAVID THOMAS

I was reminded recently of the importance of remembering. Through three chapters of Deuteronomy (7-9) we read injunctions to remember, and not to forget, what the Lord your God has done. I find this particularly meaningful in days such as these which are full of so much uncertainty. How important it is to hold onto the things of which we are certain, and to remember how God has brought us this far.

Remembering 2021 is to remember God bringing us through transitions in the midst of the second year of the COVID pandemic. For myself, one such transition was to that of solo pastor – a new role for me. I thank all of you who helped to make this transition with your prayers, encouragement, and assistance. Transitioning back to in-person services in the fall gave us the opportunity to worship God together outside under a walnut tree (which I have to confess I had never really taken the time to notice!). Sometimes you don't know what you might be capable of until circumstances demand it. We thought "Why didn't we think of this before?!" and were happy to have the chance to begin worshipping together in-person once again.

We continued to see how the gospel could be made known through technology. Last summer marked the second season of a virtual summer student, and we were blessed by Drew McMillan and the work she put into our second virtual summer camp. Our small groups continued to meet on Zoom throughout the year, and I'm thankful for the volunteers (Janelle Zeeb and Lise Hawkins) who took on a leadership role. Our small groups remained an important point of connection with God and with one another. We also discovered how meaningful an hour of prayer could be online, and look forward to continuing our monthly evenings of prayer as a congregation.

I want to thank the Deacons Board for working alongside me, and for all your encouragement and support. I also want to thank our church staff. Jennifer continues to hold things together in the hub that is our church office. Both she and Dan perform countless tasks that, while unheralded, make such a difference in the life of our congregation. Adolfo continues to bless us with his musical gift, and accommodate (and many times intuitively) my arrangement contributions. All of them make my work better.

As does my wife Nicole, without whom I could not do what I do, and who is a true partner in ministry – a helpmeet in the literal sense of the word as she meets me with her help constantly.

It's so good to begin to be able to meet together once again, and I look forward to seeing more of you more often and more meaningfully. At the same time, I recognize the importance of the present moment. I don't want to be thinking simply in terms of "What happens when we come out of COVID" or any other unspecified date in the future. I want us all to be thinking of what

living in the kingdom of God means for us now both as individuals and as a church. I want to leave us with the words of the vision statement that church leadership formulated last year. I want to put the challenge to us all to ask how we are living out the words of this statement now.

Through the Holy Spirit, we seek to be built into a family of faith rooted in love and centred in Christ, into which others are welcomed and embraced. We seek to be transformed as disciples of Jesus, being equipped and equipping others to serve and to evangelize through our church and into the surrounding community. We seek to be a church growing in faith, forming deeper relationships with God, with one another, and those seeking God.

In Christ,

Pastor David