

Dear friends,

Looking back over the last year seems like an odd exercise, as it seems that two months ago seems like a year ago. This pandemic seems to represent some sort of seismic shift in many ways, the extent of which is as of yet unknown. I like to think in such times of the story of the Ebenezer stone, and how it signified “The Lord has brought us thus far.” Where has the Lord brought us from as we look back over a year?

I think of the people who were with us and who have left us. We said good-bye to “Saint Dorothy” last year and look forward to that great reunion. We also said good-bye in another way to Helen Lenz, who followed God’s call on her life to Kingsway Baptist where she is engaged in children’s ministry. Before the summer, we welcomed Pastor Abby back among us. We once again welcomed old and new friends from Murfreesboro in July. At the same time we welcomed our summer student John DeWitt, who was with us in June and July. I am thankful that Blythwood is a church that supports theological education and is an exciting training ground for those called to vocational ministry.

Speaking of theological education, 2019 marked my first full year in the Doctor of Practical Theology program at McMaster Divinity College. I am working my way slowly (one course per semester) through the course work and right now am in the middle of my fifth (of eight) course. My practice of interest is hospitality, and how the practice of hospitality might provide insights to an urban congregation. I’ll keep you informed of my progress as I go along, and ask that you keep me and my studies in your prayers.

Speaking of praying, I want to thank the Board of Deacons who support Pastor Abby and myself in our work. I also want to thank the team with which I word alongside. Pastor Abby continues to encourage and sharpen me. At the same time she is a reminder of Christ’s compassion and our call to discipleship. Jennifer is a steady presence in the office and looks after us and the day to day affairs of the church with style. I appreciate Dan’s attention to detail, conversation, drumming and chord tutorials. Adolfo continues to bless me with his music and put up with my arranging/re-arranging.

As always I wish to thank my wife Nicole. She has been a calm and steady influence in my life, and continues to be in my life of ministry. Nicole points me toward God, and I am reminded of Christ’s service to others each time I see her doing the same. I could not do what I do without her.

As I write this we are in the middle of a season of uncertainty. In such times I like to remember the things of which we are certain. God has placed a call on our lives as individuals and as a church family. God has blessed us and has enabled us to be a blessing in North Toronto in all the ways that are described in this report, along with ways we know nothing about. God has indeed brought us thus far. We trust that God will continue this work in and through us, and are excited to find out what that will look like.

In Christ

Pastor David