

**Report of
Pastor for Parish Life
The Rev. John H. Brock
September 2020**

I am glad to see you all dealing to the best of our abilities with the ongoing quarantine and pandemic. I have seen how it is taking a toll on so many of us.

A brief summary on my sabbatical:

It was mostly relaxing. I was able to get some great ideas from the material I read. I am looking forward to implementing some of them. As an aside, I rather quickly stopped reading one of the books I had planned on reading: *The Associate Pastor: Second Chair, Not Second Best* by Martin E. Hawkins. In the introduction I read a comment about "men who desire to serve the Lord . . ." There was an endnote attached, so I looked it up. It read "*Although I believe there are places for women in ministry, especially concerning the mentoring of other women, because of personal doctrinal beliefs pertaining to women and the senior pastorate, I am largely addressing this book to men in the ministry.*" (P. 198) I then took a closer look at ALL the chapter titles, and discovered Chapter 10: *Second Fiddle to the Second Fiddle: Did They Hire Your Wife?* I stopped reading at that point. In its place, I read (listened to, actually) *The Warmth of Other Suns* by Isabel Wilderson. This is a wonderful and amazing fictional account (although based on her conversations with those who lived through the stories) of the migration of African-Americans out of the south and to the north and west. While not dealing with Associate Pastorate issues, it was mind opening to the experiences of a great number of our fellow Americans, whose skin happens to be a different pigmentation than my own.

September has been spent playing catchup, not only due to my sabbatical, but the death of, first, my mother, and then her only remaining sibling. In between cleaning out Mom's apartment and working on settling her estate, we have begun in-person worship. This appears to be going well. We have had nice numbers in attendance. We have worked out some difficulties in how to get people in and out of the building. We are, I feel, doing a good job of keeping our members as safe as we can.

I had a memorial service in September, and have another scheduled for November. I have a wedding in November as well. We have restarted the Men's Tuesday Morning Bible Study out at Brother's Family Dining in Mechanicsburg. We have been working toward a time of worship for our Affirmation of Baptism Students. We are already talking about how we are going to handle Christmas Eve & Day worship. The new Audio/Visual equipment we are using is going well.

In total, I feel the staff is continuing to respond to this crisis in a positive and forward fashion. When I speak with pastors from other, usually much smaller, congregations, I am pleased with how much we are doing, and how well we are reaching out to the congregation.

God's peace,
Pastor John Brock