

Pastor's Report

Fall Congregational Meeting 2021

Dear Saints,

Over the last two years, we have had multiple changes in our lives. Who could have predicted how life would have changed almost overnight. We've had no choice but to navigate through the pandemic and get used to living, and indeed worshiping, a different way. We don't have a "new normal" yet, just a "new next."

In spite of the pandemic, we have continued to find a way to worship and further our mission. We started the year with online worship only, and as of July 4th, we started to re-gather for worship. We are certainly not back to full capacity in attendance, but people are returning slowly and cautiously.

We have worked hard to create a safe space for worship and meetings in our facility: our sanctuary is disinfected each week; we changed air conditioner filters; we continue to keep doors open during worship; we wear masks throughout the services; we require vaccinations for those worshiping in the sanctuary.

Many of our rental groups have returned, and we have had some other interest in rental space. These spaces are cleaned on a daily basis by the groups, and they are disinfected weekly by our facilities manager.

Our new sound system has been installed, and we continue to get comments from those watching online that our broadcasts are much improved. We also extended the hours for our Assistant Project Manager to assist in establishing our new app. (This has been interrupted due to extreme illness. It will restart once Camille Araullo is back in the office.)

We welcomed new members prior to our April Congregational Meeting and these folk definitely hit the ground running by actively participating in worship services and other ministries. We keep people connected through weekly Bible Studies (in English and Spanish), Evening Vespers, praying the Rosary, and, until recently, Pastor Pop-ups. We have continued to feed the hungry with our weekly Food Bank. We have also continued our monthly Saturday Night Spiritual Interfaith service.

We honored our graduates, participated in multiple online Pride events, celebrated Asian-American Heritage month, African American Heritage Month, and gave out our first \$1000 Christine Daniels scholarship. Thanks to our

invaluable Archives Team and Creative Worship Team, we had a most excellent 53rd Anniversary worship celebration.

I have, on behalf of the church, attended monthly telebriefings by the LA County Department of Public Health; attended monthly Clergy Roundtable events by the LA County Department of Mental Health; attended several webinars given by our denomination; been guest speaker on several community panels and radio shows.

As we continue to navigate through our “new next,” my hope is that we can look at our challenges as new opportunities. Soon, we will begin our annual stewardship campaign, and we will also have a church-wide “visioning meeting.” We truly need to look at how we “do” church in addition to how we “have” church, now and in the future. How do we “Be MCC, the hands, feet and heart of Christ in the world today?” What do YOU want to see? What are YOUR priorities? How do YOU see ministry going out of Founders MCC? These are questions we want (and NEED!) to address.

We look forward to the day we can make up for events we’ve missed: celebrations, retirements, memorials. They may be delayed, but they are certainly not forgotten.

While there certainly are challenges in our present, and I’m sure in our future, I am still glad that God has called us together to carry this Gospel message. A pandemic may have put some of our plans on-hold, stopped some of them, and even accelerated some of them, we are still in this ministry together. I am proud to be your pastor, and I am honored to continue this journey with you.

Pastor Keith