

## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

AUGUST 2025

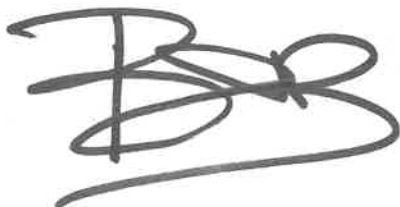
A few weeks ago in worship, the focus of the gospel lesson was the parable of the Good Samaritan, a parable of an individual who noticed a need, saw within himself an ability to do something about it and went out of his way to be a part of the solution to the need. One person in the congregation that day took that passage seriously. Because she finds addressing the needs of the soil as therapeutic, she rolled up her sleeves and took the initiative to come back after lunch and pull all the weeds from the area around the front door. What was so admirable about that effort is a person's love of the Church which led to an action for the improvement of the Church.

Within the sermon that day, I referred to a malaise that has become a part of our culture since the days of COVID and has subtly crept into all volunteer organizations of which the Church is one. That malaise is a growing sense of apathy about things, a sense of not caring enough about a need to get involved. It seems people would rather have it easy for themselves than good for others, the epitome of self-centeredness. Since good requires initiative and effort, people are choosing to sit on their hands rather than use them for the betterment of something outside of themselves.

Now this Church certainly is not sitting on its hands as a whole; it's distributing up to 200 meals on Monday nights and further, it has reinstituted the effort to a weekly basis. Well done, good and faithful servants! A successful VBS program was run for over 170 children, the majority of who have no church affiliation in attendance. This Church proclaimed the love of God to many children who had not heard of it. Well done! But have you ever noticed how the same people are often doing the readings on Sunday or doing the ushering? That is because the sign-up sheets have several blanks on them and the faithful few must be asked to step in again. A couple weeks ago, one of our new members signed up to read and did a wonderful job. There are many faithful readers who read on a regular basis, but the congregation is blessed when other individuals step forward as well. For one reason, it helps people to get to know people. The common practice in this Church is to invite people to volunteer by putting their name on sign-up sheets that are placed on the table where you enter/leave the sanctuary. With the size of this congregation, it should not take long for those sign-up sheets to get filled and yet there remain blanks. This is just one example of where there are gaps in the life of this Church.

During this transitional period, one of the tasks of the interim minister is to fire up the Church. The coals are hot, but I would like to fan the flames before the individual God has called to serve this Church into the future arrives. Thus, the gist of this *'Mouse'* article is to encourage everyone to be open to increasing involvement. When we did the mission study last year, you graded the Church with a B-. In the classic way of grading, B is considered good. When I brought that result to the Session, the comment was made that the Church is doing good but there is room for improvement. One thing that will bring about improvement is greater involvement of the membership. Though the easy way of not getting involved can be alluring, the decision to help is what ultimately brings good for others and blessing to the self. How best might you be able to contribute something of your time and talent? You are not being asked to do everything, but I would encourage you to do something.

With love,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be the initials 'BB' with a stylized flourish underneath.