



Assistant to the Bishop

2020 Report to Assembly

Pastor Ken Sandlin

Who knew that, when I began writing my report to the 2020 Synod Assembly, there would not be an assembly in 2020? The Covid-19 Pandemic has changed the way things are done for all of us. Since March 18th, I have been working from home.

Actually ... when it comes to writing reports, sending emails, making phone calls and reading Rostered Minister Profiles, I don't mind working from home. But I do miss greeting congregations after Sunday morning worship; and enjoying conversation and coffee with them around a table in the fellowship hall. I miss our monthly in-person staff meetings and eating lunch together at Head West Subs. I miss shaking hands and grocery shopping without a face mask and breakfast after church with old friends. But that's the way it is and that's the way it needs to be. Until there's effective treatments and a readily available vaccine, we need to remain diligent, and always mindful of how our actions affect the health of others.

So, I sit at home, worshipping on-line on Sunday mornings and working at my desk during the week. As expected, the submission of Rostered Minister Profiles has slowed considerably since March 1st. A few congregations are involved in an interview process. But on-sight visits are difficult; and a call vote can't be taken until we can gather for "in-person" congregational meetings. Sixteen congregations in our synod continue to wait for a nomination letter, and five others are preparing their paperwork in anticipation of receiving a nomination. It is my hope that, as summer arrives and Covid-19 restrictions are eased, more pastors will be submitting their RMPs.

Zoom has become the go-to method of conducting meetings and visiting with friends and colleagues. Candidates from our synod are also adjusting to having all their classes on-line and, for a few, to an internship that is ending much differently than how it began. We are learning new ways to make it work. The call process and our candidates' journey to assignment and ordination continue.

Next year, when I write my report to the 2021 Synod Assembly, I pray that we all will have made it through the pandemic safely and in good health; and that we'll be able to gather together in Peoria to worship the God who holds us close, in all of our highs and lows, from now until forever.