

A Posting from the Pastor January 2019

The next new year sits before us, the pages of the calendar bare, the promises of faith telling us that all will be well regardless of what comes our way, what messes we stumble into: *nothing can separate us – not any created thing – from the love of God in Christ Jesus*. It is no small thing to recall and repeat these words because threats to our sanity and serenity come when we see the storm brewing and when it surprises us.

2019 will be a pivotal year for us as a congregation. We will have conversations together about faith and foundations, naming what it is we hold most dear. It helps to put words to feelings so they can be evaluated, up-dated, renewed, discarded. Many of you still have tapes playing in your hearts and minds of yesterday's crowds and accomplishments and comforts.

As an outsider, I can't know how poignant those memories can be in this time of diminishment.

But diminishment does not mean disappearance or defeat. We keep showing up for worship, some weekly, some monthly, some as able. We maintain our choir, offering Sunday School for one age grouping and a youth group for another, and the Session and Deacons do their work with care and energy. Our outreach reminds the community of our interest in them and our willingness to extend ministry beyond these walls.

We will work towards agreement on a new mission/vision statement going forward. We will experiment with new ventures as the Spirit leads us, willing to fail in the short run to succeed in the longer view. New faces may join us or not – that is secondary for us: being faithful to the tasks, people, needs and opportunities at hand is all God asks from any of us.

I'm looking forward to the next step in our process, the series of meetings in mid-January (provided snow and cold don't interfere). Your feelings, fears, deep confidence and experiences – as they are shared – will bring the kind of clarity being the Church in these times requires.

It continues to be a privilege and blessing to serve Christ among you. Thank you for your signs of appreciation and love; the time seems to be rushing by.

Let me close with this quote from the recent biography of Fred (Mr.) Rogers, a life-long Presbyterian: *The Presbyterian values – hard work, responsibility and caring for others, parsimony, duty to family, ethical clarity, a strong sense of mission, and a relentless sense of service to God – drove every moment of Fred Roger's life*. I hope we will emulate him as we live and move and have our being. God bless you.