

Opening Prayer

Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Clergy Address

Duane and the Vestry have asked me to give a short address regarding our congregation's Liturgical and Pastoral Life in 2020. It has been a remarkable year on many fronts, but there are a few things that I would like to highlight as blessings in this time:

1. The laity, staff, and clergy put together high-quality worship online this past year through the hard work, time, and a steep learning curve. Thank you to all who recorded, edited, read, sang, played, or shared other talents to make this possible. It was indeed a team effort each week, especially during Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost, and Christmas. As with each passing month, we thought maybe this Holiday would be the one where we can come back to in-person worship.
2. By God's grace and the support of the vestry, Red Door Ministry could be open every Friday during 2020. I say by the grace of God because we didn't once have to close due to weather in 2020, and on the second week of COVID shut down, we were able to provide a meal card. The same is true for Christmas Day and New Years Day in 2021. The vestry never blinked when we surpassed our budget for 2020 and helped us to continue to feed the hungry throughout this year. We were able to nourish more than 4,000 people.
3. Over the year, we have witnessed births, baptisms, weddings, and deaths. In the face of adversity, we prayed and cared for one another, learning what love looks like in the face of pandemics. None of us could have imagined what would be asked of us in mere weeks after our annual meeting last year, but we have shown up for one another. People offered to pick up groceries and prescriptions early on, folks making prayer shawls and fleece blankets, donating books and clothes to the clothing closet, and the vestry making phone calls to every congregation member to highlight a few. As Bishop Goff the clergy early on in COVID, we weren't just learning how to fly; we were building the plane in the process. But I believe while we may not see each other every week in person, by keeping our physical distance, we reflect the love of God to one another and the community around us. It is a blessing to know love and witness the growing discipleship of so many folks over the year. We all promised in our baptisms to seek and serve Christ in all persons loving our neighbor as ourselves. This year invited us to live into that covenant with God in new ways. Let us continue exploring faith, community, and service in 2021 and beyond, holding onto this love today, tomorrow, and always.

Thank you all, God bless you, and God loves you.