

# Pastor's Update -- September 2022

## Threshold Conversations -- Now Scheduled!

*Saturdays @ 10:00 AM in the Sanctuary      Begin Together, Leave as Needed*

**September 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>**

**October 8<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>**

**November 5<sup>th</sup>**

People seek out the church in the hope of heaven, and what they find is you and me! We bring ourselves as we are and seek to encounter God. And who are we? We are those whom God loves in all our beauty and imperfection, in all our brilliance and misunderstanding, in all our good intentions and impatience, in all our hope and sense of futility. God is with us; ALL of us.

Our pandemic experience has accelerated and amplified realities that were present before it began. Two thirds of pre-pandemic church attendees have not returned to worship services or church activities. Traditional leadership roles are being redefined; many remain vacated. Now what, and who, and where, and how, and when?

As your pastor, I do believe we are invited to listen for the Spirit's direction in this moment and to give voice to what we see, hear, and imagine is the future of our life in and as the church. Do you feel a nudge to give voice to a hope, a concern or need? What are you hoping to hear? At the threshold we stand on one side and consider our life/faith experiences. Then, we engage our faith imagination for what may be our next steps. What will we learn together?

As you participate in this extended conversation, please keep in mind the following:

1. These conversations are NOT a strategic planning process. That comes later.
2. Bring the mindset of a poet, not a planner; as one who goes fishing but not for fish ;o)
3. This IS a conversation in community as we listen for the Spirit's presence and direction.
4. All ages are welcomed to participate, including our children.
5. Pastor Brandon will provide instructions onsite for how to participate.
6. Please arrive on time to begin together, then you may leave as needed.
7. You may bring water to drink during the conversation.
8. Please wear a mask, though you may remove it when you speak.

## TOWN HALL – THIS SUNDAY

**TOPIC: How do we grow our faith together?**

**Sunday, August 21<sup>st</sup> – 11:15 AM**

Our life together is enhanced whenever we can share news of our ministries, ask questions, and consider the current realities of our faith community. That would be true at any point in the life of a congregation, but it is especially true as we move through COVID realities and the related shifting dynamics of society, which includes anticipated changes of our United Methodist denomination, and U.S. politics.

- On July 17<sup>th</sup> we held our first “Town Hall” Q & R gathering and focused on our **Finances**. Most who attended worship stayed for the discussion. As stated, we began at 11:15 AM and ended before noon. Joe Archer provided updates on our financial status and thoughts about future budget planning.
- Our August 21<sup>st</sup> Town Hall gathering focused on our ministries of **Service & Justice**. Co-chairpersons, Susan Padgett and Marge Matoba, reported on the work of the committee and explored in conversation how others may be moved to engage the current and future areas of justice work and service with the committee.
- **THIS SUNDAY, September 18<sup>th</sup>, our Town Hall will focus on our Faith Formation.** How are we formed in our faith in this congregation. Especially, how our children are nurtured in the faith among us? What is our ideal of a mature faithfilled follower of Jesus and lover of God? How do we participate in learning how to become mature in our faith?
- For those who want to stay afterward, Pastor Brandon will show photos from his recent vacation to Scotland and Austria!

These “town hall” conversations are a monthly feature of our life together. In future gatherings, we will hear from various other ministries of the church, like Grace Garden, Music, our United Women of Faith, and the Trustees. Please be present as we live through these times together in good faith and in good conversation!