

The Pastor's Report

Well, well, well....APRIL!

I don't know about you, but for *me* April always feels like the finish line of the grueling marathon that is winter. Now I know *some* of you actually LIKE winter (well, at least one of you for sure, maybe a few more who fly south or west) and that is fine. I think, though, that I speak for the great majority of us who are quite happy to say "Whew!"

I am actually writing this the Wednesday before Easter.

While I might be persuaded to get all theological in this month's Pastor's Report given the timing, instead, I am feeling oh so pastoral.

I must to tell you, it is an increasingly weird thing being here for so many years; weird in a good way. There is a depth of fondness, love and affection for *all* of you, and for *each* of you, that becomes almost overwhelming; expressing itself in a profound sense of gratitude and deep feelings of empathy.

On any number of levels, I confess to being amazed that we are pulling this off; being a church, that is. Not just surviving (which is enough of a feat these days no matter how you look at it) but, actually, *thriving*. Even though the congregation keeps changing, with old friends dying and new friends arriving, we keep "pressing on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called us heavenward in Christ Jesus" (as Paul says in Philippians 3:14). Admittedly, we are none too fancy or sophisticated, but we are certainly getting the job done

in all areas our life together as a congregation. We have an awful lot of balls in the air these days, and I'm doing my darndest to keep my eye on every single one of them. Though occasionally this can be exhausting, mostly I'm amazed, and only ever grateful for each of you individually, and all of us together.

While such a sense of gratitude leaves me with a warmth in my soul, a deep sense of empathy imparts an ache in my heart which arises from the

awareness of the challenges each of us, in our own way, are facing in our lives. Couples taking the enormous step of having a/another child, parents facing the overwhelming task of raising children, children growing up, young people making their way in the

world, folks struggling to make a living, the seemingly never ending challenges of growing old, children now caring for aging parents, and the folks coming to the end of their journey through this world; and all the surprises, curveballs and obstacles that come our way, often with little notice or warning. Life is hard, *no* question about it.

Given this, and though a rather modest proclamation, please know how sure and sincere I am when I say to you, "It is going to be ok. You are doing great." Together, we are *doing* it. We just need to keep going; and we will.

Know that you are loved,
Rev. Mike

It is going to be
Okay
You are doing
Great

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. - Isaiah 4:10