

Community of St. Ninian
Annual Report
November 6, 2020

This has probably been one of the strangest years in the history of the community.

For the first few months after our last annual meeting, things continued in our usual routine. We had a Christmas party and began the new year with a couple of new regular visitors and plans for our usual activities, including Family Promise and our ice cream social at Victor Ashe Park. Our first Family Promise meal in March turned out to be our last in-person meeting of the year as the COVID-19 virus shut down most in-person activities.

Since then, we have been holding our regular meetings via Zoom, with an average of 10 participants. It is less-than-ideal, but we are grateful for the technology that has enabled us to stay connected and in community with one another. It is a blessing to be able to see each other regularly, even if virtually. We recently upgraded our Zoom account to allow phone-in participation for another of our members. This also lets us have longer meetings and permits other options such as in-meeting polling which we will use at our annual meeting to call our officers.

We decided to make our charitable donations earlier in the year so that the recipients could make their plans and have the funds available to use as needed during the year. We made donations to Family Promise, Strength for the Journey, the Volunteer Ministry Center, the Interfaith Clinic, Positively Living, the Tennessee Equality Project Foundation, and A Place at the Table for a total of \$1,800. This was an increase of \$700 over 2019. In addition, we have given \$940 to assist individuals since our 2019 annual meeting. Because we have not received too many requests and we know that there are those who need help, we decided to donate \$1,000 to the MCKK Deacon Assistance Fund for them to distribute to those in need in keeping with our guidelines.

The ice cream social was cancelled. We continued to provide our Family Promise meals, but have had to do it via socially distanced delivery to their main location since they are not housing families in churches during the pandemic.

We currently have nine covenanting members, the same as last year. In addition, three others have regularly participated with us through the year.

Some of us are old enough to remember the Bob Dylan song from 1963, "The Times They Are A'changin'." Dylan was well-known for his poetic songs that spoke into a culture that was going through a major disruption. At the end of the first stanza verse he wrote;

"Then you better start swimmin' or you'll sink like a stone
For the times they are a-changin'."

This really hits home as our society navigates this pandemic disruption. We have all been challenged over these past months with sink-or-swim decisions. As we move into uncharted

waters, we will inevitably experience the feelings of sinking and swimming. It seems that our Community is at least learning to at least tread water!

Many of us are experiencing disaster fatigue. During this time, we try to remember that the Good News is the good news, as we look for mercies each day. With bleary eyes, we try to focus on those things. We give thanks for the ways we have been blessed and have been able to bless others through this Community. We pray that God will continue to use us and that we will remain open to the Spirit's leading in the year ahead.

Jan Thomas

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