

Pastor's Report 2021

We have all seen the memes that remind us of a difficult 2021. So it is with understood redundancy that I begin my report with "2021 was a difficult year."

However, within the tumult there are many instances where a slightly different perspective reveals affirming verities. Some may be inclined to doubt this reports proposition, suggesting a hue of pink was present in the lens of the observer. So I ask you give your clever cleric a kindhearted ear and hear him out.

At the genesis of the year in question, I was not fully recovered from a rather disheartening drape of depression. It was a tenuous time of troubling thought. Still unable to be at my best the confidence of returning to fulfill a complete list of duties was waning. Nearing February's end, things were looking up. It was the consensus of concerned care providers that if it was to be, I would need to risk an attempt returning to the maximum amount of employment. Should such an experiment fail, the result would be obvious. But to succeed would indicate that I was capable of continued commitment. Past pastoral predictions were such that success was dubious. The odds heavily favored failure.

As the saying goes, "the proof is in the pudding." A quick glance at the gooey goodness provides proof positive that I was not a good bet if one followed statistics. I credit this vicar's victory to the kindness, encouragement and compassion of the congregation. It was not me who defied the odds. It was we who accomplished this spectrum of significant salvation.

On the technical front, there was another noteworthy accomplishment. Upon my arrival nigh 10 years hence, sharing our worship was restricted to a magnetic mode of auditory archiving. That is AMC was still in the by gone era of case tapes. While the mode of distribution aptly advanced to access on the World Wide Web, it remained bound to the audio range. When, at the close of the previous year, our yearnings pushed us to procure a recorder of the most modern means. It was a significantly steep line of cumulative curvature that was overcome. While our knowledge base on proper production protocols continues to increase, we must give thanks to the gallant group of gracious volunteers that we may now turn to YouTube to take in the full field of aural and visual inputs encapsulating worship in AMC's sacrosanct sanctuary.

As the pandemic produced a prolonged predicament which forced us to forgo fostering Christian community, it was with wide wonder that we dared to dream of alternative assemblies of association. We began by breaking bread through a continuous chain of caring. One by one we met, shared and savored a scarce moment of normalcy that help sooth our sorrowed souls. Then, through the modern miracle of virtual gathering, we partook with proper pandemic procedure via Zoom. While not perfect, it was wonderful to worship in wide screen.

As summer surrendered we greeted fall with exuberant expectations the various vaccines offered. While still structured for safety, we gathered with great grandeur as we worshiped together after a time of tumult and trepidation. As the pews proceeded to be populated with the people we love, it was apparent that all appreciated the time of togetherness. And even though the congregational crescendo

crashed on Christmas Eve, we were sufficiently skilled to make a rapid return to recording our worship. Thus the year ended in the self-same situation as it began, as omicron exposed our overly optimistic outcome for 2021. Experience exerts its existential understanding that while necessary, these intervals of insufferable isolation are only for a tidbit of time the tumult of life.

Finally it would be amiss to avert my announcement ending our pastor parishioner partnership. The decision to culminate this endearing endeavor took a lot of determined discernment to decide. However, I believe it was the necessary time to negotiate a natural ending to our mutual memo of indenture. AMC has seen a significant stream of challenging change. In ministry, there comes a time when the ongoing presence of the pastor produces a deliberate delay detrimental to the next steps for a congregation. When this occurs, learned leadership understands to facilitate facing the facts they must acquiesce to allow alternatives to become apparent.

While I rescind my role as reverend my desire is for continued congregational participation with this beloved bevy of comely Christian community.

Pastor Dan Kehler