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Pastor's Report – Brookfield UMC

Charge Conference 2022 for 2023

The past year has been one of adjusting to the world of fluctuating pandemic to maintain and improve the functioning of the church and its activities. Health concerns have always at the top of everyone's mind, and it has been challenging to get back in the rhythm of worship (where people feel safe) and have activities that are meaningful and safe to attend.

As people were getting back to church again in 2021, we began participating in the "Reaching New People" cohort. By evaluating who we were as a church and our mission field coupled with a new approach to involve new people, we began reaching out to the community in new ways.

We completed a series of projects last year to make our church more accessible and safer for people. While our choir disbanded, we were able to bring in a new music director who has had a big impact on the quality of worship music and singing. We developed a new church logo and continued to find ways to enhance our outdoor and in-church worship with new equipment and Wi-Fi.

Our preschool continues to take advantage of grants and has been able to replace old equipment and plan updates to their portion of our facility. Attendance is good and the staff is wonderful.

As a church, we have emphasized our call to "Love our Neighbor" by continuing to provide food monthly to the community – we typically help 70-80 families a month. We continue our outreach to the local schools by providing school supplies, pantry items and helping families of students in emergencies.

As the pandemic "re-emerged" as Omicron at the end of last year it was disheartening to suffer reduced worship attendance and restricted activities as we were building back up. However, we continue to work at providing authentic worship to those that attend as well as folks watching on Facebook Live. We have been streaming services in various ways for the last year and a half. We have also provided a Facebook Live midweek prayer service for the last two years. While our resources have been limited the church has tried new methods of reaching people in the community.

We believe we are a church for our community and are focused on building relationships, finding out what is needed, inviting others to be a part and helping others develop a relationship with Christ. Our youth ministry and our food ministry have emerged as key efforts to serve our neighbors during the pandemic. We provide safe and fun activities for students and are an ongoing, regular source of food and other items for folks in our community. Many of our families lack a consistent supply of food, clothing, medical care and school supplies. Various community groups utilize our facility for meetings and we do what we can to accommodate them (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, women's' groups, a Yoga group, etc.).

We regularly evaluate our goals to try to improve worship, create places for new people and to be sensitive to the needs of the community. We continue to maintain an up-to-date social media presence through our church web site and church and youth ministry Face Book pages. Integrating new people into church activities continues to be a focus. Whether people are "churched" or "un-churched" we feel many in our community are not active in church activities or faith development. And we are called to reach out to them with the light and love of Christ.

In His Name,

Pastor Dick Smith