

## Relationship With God Panel 2022 Annual Report

By anyone's perspective, this year has been extraordinary—offering new perspectives and presenting ongoing difficulties and challenges. Our panel's charge is to provide for meaningful worship and faith formation for all.

High points of this year came even amid the deep valleys of discouragement and concern that covid brought.

- First and foremost, we prayed. Our whole Session invited the congregation to pray with us daily in September for the future of our church. We can witness to many things “breaking loose” that month, especially the decision to return to our sanctuary as soon as possible. We continue to study prayer and invite all to pray for our church daily.
- We returned to worship in the sanctuary on November 14. There were lots of limitations—folks in the sanctuary could hear but not see anyone online; folks online couldn't see anyone in the sanctuary but the pastor. There were glitches, but we got started. Now we're on the cusp of truly hybrid worship. We have glimpses of great possibilities—beautiful video and music in the sanctuary, live views of worshippers in the sanctuary and worshippers at home, sharp clear pictures.
- Volunteer power to run worship continues to be in short supply. As you may see, a few people are doing an inordinate amount of the work necessary to worship together. We all are needed to help with welcoming worshippers and helping with the mics during joys and concerns in the sanctuary. We all are also needed online as a liturgist to read prayers and scripture during worship. We're grateful to all who work so hard Sunday after Sunday. Please ease their load by offering to help, too.
- The confirmation class lifted all our spirits: Mlumbeni and Mlinda Nkoma, Daniel Simi, Carolyn Murphy, John Rocket, and Madi Stagno committed to weekly classes together over several months. Taught by Pastor Megan and Jay and Janet Lough, Chris Simi, and Carolynn Baer, we all learned together as they prepared to affirm the faith of their baptisms. We are joyful and grateful for these vibrant young people.
- Bell Choir—Janet Lough rang us in this year at the start of every online service. We are grateful for the sound of her bell that reminded us of previous times together. This fall we rejoiced that the bell choir was able once more to ring out beautifully in the sanctuary under the excellent direction of first Lindsey and then Jill Smith.
- OWL technology—with some of the donations from the Lois Akin Memorial Fund, we purchased an OWL. It's a device that enables our classes and groups to go hybrid. The OWL rotates so that there is a camera and mic focused on whoever is speaking at the in person group, even though they are sitting around a table. It is another blessing from Lois who was a dedicated Sunday School teacher and who faithfully witnessed and reached out to others.
- Faith formation—adult classes this year included a study of the weekly lectionary Bible readings, a video series on faith, and a current class on prayer. There are weekly opportunities to read the Bible and to learn through seasonal readings at Advent and

Lent. Family faith formation lessons are sent twice monthly in our Tuesday email to the congregation, preschool and other interested community members.

- Special Services— For Lent last year, we worshipped on Zoom with candles and ashes at home. Jay built the tomb on CPC's front lawn. For Easter, we were still online only but celebrated with beautiful music. For Advent we were back in the sanctuary, and our families and members took turns lighting the Advent candles there. Christmas Eve was our first hybrid holiday service and we celebrated with candles, readings, and bells.

We continue to face challenges as we work to worship God, study his Word, and pray for His direction. Please continue to show grace, patience and love as we the people of CPC make our way through this new and eventful time together.

Carolynn Baer

Jay Lough

2/20/22