

Pastor's Report – November 2011

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” Psalms 46:1

This may be one of the hardest reports I have yet to write. Most pastors don't like to spotlight trouble. Most of the time we try to deal with it and move beyond it as quickly as possible. But that is not always possible and this is one of those times. Therefore I wish to address this head-on so that you have my perspective on what's happening in the life of our church.

Not only is God our refuge and strength, God is with us as we walk through this valley. As shocking as the resignations of Miriam and Patrick were, I have been even more shocked by how we as a faith community are handling our emotions, words and actions relative to these losses. At a time when we need to come together as one, there are divisions among us. Each time this happens we do damage to our church and to many of the people for whom we are called to be a resource.

Long-term pastorates have similarities to long-term relationships. They bring stability but they also bring familiarity. They bring security but can also be taken for granted. In February we will celebrate eleven years of ministry together. We know each other's warts and are faced with the question do we remain in this relationship. If so, what changes need to be made so that we can enhance our relationship?

Questions are never wrong and I pray we will always ask them. Accusations, insults, half-truths and jumping to conclusions are never right and I pray we will stop doing them. For Holy Cross to fulfill her mission and vision we must participate in healthy church politics that move us forward and hold each other accountable for unhealthy church politics that move us backward.

People want and need the church to be different. People want and need a pastor they can believe in. They want to see that we really do love each other and we can get along and when we disagree, we can agree to that as well. People need us to rise up and be the church of Jesus Christ in word and deed. People need us to work together and speak well of each other and lift each other up.

Can we do that? Will we do that? Or will we allow our differences to separate and divide us yet again? I ask you to join me in praying for God's will to be done.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Sandy O'Steen, Pastor