

## ***From the Pastor...***

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

As followers of Christ, we celebrate the risen Jesus in our worship and in our work. We rejoice AND we rise ourselves as Jesus led us to serve our neighbor and share the good news.

We know that “we are not just with Jesus but within Jesus, as much a part of him as a he is of God. The security of that knowledge brings can be a springboard for action in the world; sharing the good news, spreading the love of Jesus and working for justice.” (Sundays and Seasons)

The Easter season coincides with spring here in Chicagoland. Nature rises to meet the warming temperatures and the lengthening days. Just as the trees begin to bud, and the daffodils and jonquils bloom, we turn to Christ alive in our midst. Reaching out to each other and to our neighborhoods sharing the joyous resurrection and promise of God's abundant life for all of creation.

Last month we gathered to reflect on the last 25 years—our relationships, our strengths, and our struggles. Our congregation has much to be grateful for and much to be proud of. United in Faith has nurtured people into formal and informal ministry throughout Chicagoland and beyond. Our members have become pastors. Our interns have grown to shepherd congregations and non-profits here and abroad. Our pastors have served as military chaplains and Assistants to the Bishop. We have housed and supported St. Cyprian's Food Pantry, providing nourishment to the Dunning neighborhood for two decades. We have nurtured families in need through our family crisis fund and provided scholarships for education and advancement. We have been the church for so many. We have also had our struggles. Grief and loss are not strangers to us. Beloved members have died, couples have divorced, suicide has claimed some of our children. Covid-19 sapped our energy and forced difficult decisions. We are getting older.

And we are still here! Alleluia! Planted on Irving Park Road we are still called to be God's hands and feet and voice in this place. We step into spring rejoicing in God's continuing call and blessing here. Over the next weeks we will gather to assess our current ministries and consider God's urging for tomorrow. We will eat dinner and reconnect our mission to our resources. We will share a glass of wine or tea and ponder Joel 2:28:

"And it shall come to pass afterward, *that* I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your children shall prophesy, your elders shall dream dreams, your youngsters shall see visions."

Please be prayerful as you consider which cottage meeting best suits your schedule in the coming weeks. An invitation will be forthcoming mid-late April.

All things are possible in the spring! All things are possible in Christ! Let us continue to give thanks for the abundant love of God and the gifts we are blessed to share in this world.

Happy Easter season to you all!!

*Pastor Jeanie*