

Greetings sisters and brothers in Christ at First UMC,

Thank you for receiving me into this appointment, beginning our journey together as servants of Christ. I count it a privilege to be among you.

You don't need me to tell you what strange and challenging times these are. We're living them together. And a pastoral transition in the midst of social distancing brings its own set of challenges. Please know that I am available to be present with you as your pastor through the season of uncertainty before us. Together, we will rely on the sure and certain faithfulness of God to guide and deliver us through.

I'll be offering some options for us to become acquainted over the next month. Please participate in those as you are led.

Additionally, I want to share the basics of the July messages that I will be sharing. The series is titled: IN LIGHT OF BEGINNING AGAIN. As we begin a new season of ministry together, let us claim the truths of God revealed to us through Jesus Christ and Scripture, and let us claim – together as One – God's purpose in Christ's ongoing work of Resurrection! The weekly scripture texts and themes are as follows:

- July 5: Beginning Again: IN LIGHT OF LOVE / Matthew 5:1-16 (Light was spoken into Creation ... Light was birthed into the human condition ... Light is intended to shine through the Church and into the world that Jesus still comes to save.)
- July 12: Beginning Again: IN LIGHT OF THE SPIRIT / Romans 8:1-17 (The power of the Risen Christ is with us, Church, and in light of that wonderful truth, we have power to live life that transcends our sin, our fear, our failings.)
- July 19: Beginning Again: IN LIGHT OF CHRIST'S VICTORY / Romans 8:18-28, 31-39 (The reality of the world's brokenness, of sin's darkness, of present pain and trial cannot be denied. But in light of Christ's Victory, the glory of the Lord is our strength!)
- July 26: Beginning Again: IN LIGHT OF YOU! / Luke 15:11-32 (In light of God's amazing grace to us, we are to become the Light of Christ in our daily walk and work in this world.)

Please know that you are in my thoughts and prayers. Again, I look forward to joining you in this season of journey.

Blessings in The Way of Jesus ...

- Pastor Troy Howell