

April 2018 Article: "Hectic, But Blessed"

As Holy Week began at the end of last month, I marked six months with you as your pastor. This has certainly been an eventful time for both me and my family. First, there was the very quick transition from over at Hosanna in Columbia Station. Then, in December, we made our second major move in less than two years as we moved from Brunswick to Elyria. From there, we went right into Christmastime and then into an early Lenten Season. It all feels like I've been going "a mile a minute" for these first six months!

Along the way, I've had to learn "on the fly" about the life and ministry of two long standing congregations in a newly formed dual parish. Surely, there is much that is yet to unfold in our shared ministries together. But, having been here for six months now, I have some thoughts to pass on to you:

First and foremost, I am very thankful to be here. It was truly a Godsend when you extended your call to me back at the end of August and it's been a joy getting to know all of you and serving you. I've enjoyed the challenge of serving not one but two congregations—it certainly keeps me "on my toes"—and learning about the communities of Elyria and Lorain.

Secondly, I have had to get to know far more homebound members here. At Hosanna, I never had more than two at a time that I would visit each month. But between St. John and Zion I've had as many as eighteen monthly homebound calls! Still, as I've learned to fit all these calls into each month's schedule, I've been very blessed in my visits to these folks. I would encourage all of you to get to know these older saints—to not only pray for them, but to pray about "adopting" any of them to visit regularly yourself.

Thirdly, I've been very encouraged by both congregations' work in connection with Love, Inc of Lorain County. At St. John's, it's been the monthly Baby Bank outreach that has been done through the Light 5:16 group. At Zion, it's been the bi-monthly Food Pantry outreach dinners. I'm behind you 1,000% on these kinds of ministries. Keep up the good work!

Fourthly, I've been blessed to be a part of our worship services, Bible Studies, and special presentations. While I'm thankful for those who attend these regularly, I would certainly encourage many more of you to become involved in these as they are the "meat and potatoes" of who we are as God's people here. I have never been one to try and compel people to attend these events. But I would remind you of the words of Hebrews 10:25—that we are not to forsake meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but that we would encourage one another and so much more as you see the Day (of the Lord's return) approaching.

Yes, it has been a hectic but blessed first six months for me. Again, I've enjoyed getting to know you and I hope to visit and get to know more of you in the spring and summer months ahead. May God richly bless St. John and Zion!

Your Brother in Christ, Pastor Bill