

April 17, 2020

Feed My Sheep

I grew up on a farm where we raised sheep. I always thought Jesus' admonition to "feed the sheep" was curious since most of the time our sheep fed themselves in the pasture and drank from the little stream that flowed through our farm. Of course, I was too young to understand the metaphor. Much of Jesus' ministry was about feeding people both literally and spiritually.

What I have noticed since the outbreak of Covid-19 is that our ministry has been focused mainly on "feeding the sheep" literally and spiritually. We are serving *every* Sunday meal instead of only on the Third Sunday. Meals are provided as "take-away" and served outside in order to practice physical distancing. A heartfelt thanks goes to the Third Sunday team and Beth Faeth for continuing to make this happen. Any leftover food goes to Loaves and Fishes to continue to support their efforts to feed even more who are hungry.

During this time, Groveland Food Shelf has been able to remain open, and they have been serving 120 people or more each *day*! This is usually the number of people served a week. Again, the Food Shelf staff have been creative in moving much of the food outside, creating lines where people are able to continue to keep six feet of distance, and folks wear masks and gloves. Leftover food is being processed through our organic recycling. A huge thank you to the Food Shelf staff and volunteers for continuing to make food available for those in need.

Those are the ways we are literally feeding the sheep, and here are the ways we are spiritually feeding the sheep: daily email reflections, morning video meditations, midday musical offerings, a night-time story time and evening meditation, plus our Sunday morning worship service. We have also reached out by telephone to almost all 1,500 members of our church. I'm grateful to all of you who volunteered to make calls. Seth Patterson and Nina Jonson are offering Zoom church school, youth and confirmation classes, as well as social times. Philip Brunelle has been staying in contact with the Second Service choir. The Chapel Singers continue to rehearse via Zoom. A heartfelt thanks to all staff who continue to do the work of the church.

There are all the boards and committees that are continuing to meet in order for the work of the church to continue. And then there are all the ways that you stay in touch with each other, encouraging and supporting each other through this challenging time. All these connections are "feeding the sheep!"

I feel a deep sense of gratitude that I work for a church that places such a priority on "feeding the sheep."

May God bless you!

Paula