

From the Pastor's Desk

Hello! This is my first note “from the pastor’s desk” here at PPUCC. And I would like to start by saying how welcomed Lauren and I have felt over the past few weeks. So many of you have expressed your support, offered your time if we have needs, and even opened up your homes. As Christians, we have been welcomed into God’s family by Jesus, and so it has been a blessing to be welcomed into your church family. Family relationships are interesting, don’t you think? Ideally, those relationships offer an assurance of continual support. On the other hand, we are privy to each other’s quirks and shortcomings, struggles and even sins. That’s how relationships work. That’s also why relationships can be very uncomfortable, and why so many people avoid real relationships altogether.

Friends, as we live as a family together, you will see sides of me that aren’t always the most appealing, and I will see sides of you that you would rather remain hidden. We may have expectations of each other that go unmet, and ways of doing things that rub each other the wrong way. God’s family, though, is a family based on grace and faithful, committed love. That’s how we enter into God’s family and that’s how God calls us to live once we’re here. We know each other, faults and all, and “carry each other’s burdens”; Paul tells us in Galatians 6:2 that “in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

When we feel burdened, we have a tendency to want to hide, we have a bit of a short fuse, and it is easy to point fingers. In these times, we must remember that Jesus has carried our biggest burden for us: “God made him who had no sin [Jesus] to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21). In God’s family, our burdens are not reasons to be ashamed, angry, or bitter, but opportunities to witness together God’s faithfulness and the love of his community. One of the most important ways we can grow through our struggles is by communicating them with each other. My office door is (almost) always open, both literally and figuratively. I want to hear from you what is going on in your life, any questions you have for me, anything that is frustrating you, and anything else that is making life difficult for you. Every family has its issues, but healthy families are not afraid to bring them out in the open, communicate, and be willing to bear their burdens together.

If we walk with Jesus together for any amount of time, we will face many difficulties. I pray that we will face them as brothers and sisters in God’s family, bearing each other’s burdens, and laying our lives down for each other as our Shepherd has done for us, his sheep.