

REPORT OF THE ASSOCIATE PASTOR FOR FAITH FORMATION AND OUTREACH

January marked my one-year anniversary here at Edwards Church. My sincere gratitude goes out to everyone who has helped make our shared ministry at the church successful. My sincere gratitude also goes out to folks who gave me the opportunity to learn with them through my failures. Thank you for not being too hard on me.

Our Christian Education and Faith Formation program is marching on. This year, we provided opportunities for children and youth to grow in their faith through education, worship, and service. We confirmed three youth, and sent three youth on a service and mission trip. In the summer, we planted an herb garden together. This work is truly a shared ministry of the church; a special thanks to the members of the Board of Christian Education, teachers, parents, grandparents, and church members who make this work of faith formation possible.

Seeds of Grace is also in full swing: we have completed our first two worship cycles: in October and November, on the theme of Grace; and in December on the theme of Advent. We have used a variety of worship styles to tell stories, sing songs, pray, and make art together in an intimate worship environment. Thank you to all of the members of the planning committee of Seeds of Grace, those who have attended, and those who have prayed for and supported us in other ways.

In September, I took over leading the Sunday morning Bible study from Nena Radtke. During our time together, we have moments of prayer and sharing about what is going on in our lives, read out loud from the Bible, and connect what is going on in the text to a theme or story. We began with Hymns and the Bible, moved on to a series on disciples, beginning with Jonah (the bible's most troublesome disciple) and ending with Mary (the best disciple). We finished the year by investigating the birth narratives of Jesus in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, and separating out what the Bible says from the stories we have built up surrounding them.

I have also had the opportunity to lead Sunday morning worship, usually every month or two. Often, these services will have a special role for our children and youth in them. In October, in celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, I wrote, and the church performed, a "No Rehearsal Reformation Pageant," which was great fun. I also led services on Christmas Eve Morning, and together with the Board of Christian Education, helped organize the Christmas Pageant.

What a wonderful year it has been, and thank you for the work and ministry we do together.

In faith,
Rev. Shane Montoya