

## Greetings to the Saints of Mission Presbytery!

Well, there's nothing like 75 degrees and humidity to get you ready for Christmas. I hear that's going to change, but it feels like flip-flop weather today.

We have been through quite a year together, haven't we, dear ones? At our meetings, we have "imagined," told stories, done energizers, heard about mission all over the globe, and still managed to get the work of the Presbytery accomplished. There was this hurricane thing that came through and packed a wallop for our churches and members in the Corpus Christi and Victoria regions. (oh, yeah, that) Loved ones have been born among us, and loved ones have died among us. Committees on Ministry, Preparation, Pastoral Care, Congregational Nurture, Mission/Outreach/Justice, Fiscal Oversight, Stewardship, Nominating, Church Development, H.M. King loans and Presbyterian Women all met faithfully and turned out a lot of important ministry. I managed to meet with all six of our regions, worship with 27 of our congregations, attend or take part in a whole bunch of ordinations and installations, counsel with several pastors and several congregations, shed a few tears, and in general had a ball ministering alongside you. I think we should do it again in 2018 - you think so?

Advent is a season when we hear a lot from Luke and Isaiah, and other familiar places and stories in scripture. But as I prepare to conduct the funeral of a dear and longtime friend of mine, I'm reading a different set of scriptures altogether (as you can imagine). These words from Ecclesiastes popped up yesterday, and as we reflect together on the year we've shared, they seem most appropriate:

***I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with. God has made everything suitable for its time; moreover, God has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; moreover, it is God's gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in their toil. I know that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it; God has done this, so that all should stand in awe before God. That which is, already has been; that which is to be, already is; and God seeks out what has gone by.***

I hope you have found pleasure in our toil together this year; I certainly have. So now, as Christmas and New Year's approach, may you be happy and enjoy yourselves, and eat and drink, and be blessed by God's gift of love and strengthened for the year ahead.