

2019 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ASSOCIATE PASTOR

It's the start of a new year. It's the start of a new *decade*. Can you believe it? I was just thinking about how much has changed in my own life over the past decade.

This time in 2010, I was preparing for my final semester of seminary, getting ready to graduate and to head out into the world and begin a ministry career. Can you remember where you were ten years ago? How has your life changed in the past decade?

The start of a new year can serve as a bit of a measuring stick in our lives. They can help us measure how much we've grown, where we've been, the choices we've made (both good and bad), and where we hope we're going. In addition to a new decade, it has also been the end of my first full year here at Oxford Presbyterian Church. It's hard to believe a year has flown by already.

In the past year, I've made my home here in the town of Oxford. I've had the chance to get to know each of you a bit. I have treasured the dear friendship, partnership, leadership, and support in ministry together with Pastor Lawrence, and I've shared many laughs with Bridgite this past year as we've worked together.

It's been such a joy to work together with our parents and volunteers as our Family and Campus Ministries have continued to grow and take shape this year. As I've had the chance to get to know our Christian Education committee, we've seen a lot of changes this year, too. We've welcomed two new co-chairs, Emily Lykins and Candace Crist, and extended our heartfelt gratitude to Jenn Walter for her years of service in this particular role (she continues to offer her insights and experience to the group!) With the renovation of the Seminary Building complete, we've enjoyed Seminary Cinema with Matt Benzing with screenings and discussions of classic films such as "It's A Wonderful Life" and "Chariots of Fire" to even some surprising new favorites like "Lars and the Real Girl."

We've also seen the formation of a new Youth Ministry Committee as part of our Christian Education team: a group of parents and volunteers who bring meals, help with lessons, lead games, and offer support to our youth ministry leadership. We've had pool parties and lock-ins. We've attended retreats at Kirkmont. We've sung Christmas carols and baked bread. We've held small group discussions, learned about prison ministry with Rev. Sarah Palmer, continued to make friends with youth in our other churches here in Oxford, and donated toiletry items to the Women's

Dayton Correctional Center. We've played plenty of Gaga Ball and welcomed a new 2019 confirmation class into the membership of the church! Over the summer, Candace Crist and I also accompanied our youth delegates, Jens Bartel, Zeke Groom, and Eli Walter to the 2019 Presbyterian Youth Triennium, joining over 4,000 Presbyterian Youth and another 1,000 adult advisors from churches all over the country.

This has also been a deeply rewarding season of campus ministry for me as well. Over the past year, Carol Klumb and I have worked to cultivate a small group discussion group of campus and college students that meets regularly after worship for lunch on us! From campus students who join us for worship to choir interns, this group is an opportunity to participate in discussions, study Scripture together, to explore our faith together, and to ask questions in an authentic way. This experience has even led some of our campus students to participate in our New Members' Experience and make the decision to join as new active or affiliate members.

I have also had a privilege to serve as co-advisor for Progressive Christian Students at Miami University. Meeting once a week, PCS is an ecumenical group of Miami Students (co-led by our very own Elliot Jones Boyle) that gathers together on campus to explore their faith and learn where their different faith backgrounds intersect. Serving in this role has given me a direct opportunity to meet and interact with many of our Miami Students in a meaningful way (some of whom are affiliated with OPC and some of whom are not) and offer a weekly, spiritual, and pastoral presence in their lives.

New years are also opportunities for resolutions, and our family and campus ministries have a few of those, too! As we look ahead to 2020, we are excited to begin a new Confirmation Class in the fall (led by myself). Our youth ministry program currently has seven young people and three adults (including myself) registered to attend the Urban Youth Mission Experience this July at Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago, and our campus ministry program is looking to take a group of college students to the Montreat College Conference in Montreat, NC next year. Plus, we still have our Spring Kirkmont retreat coming up, and don't forget about summer camp! I am also looking forward to a period of intentional personal spiritual growth in a few months by participating in the Mosaic of Peace experience in Jerusalem for the first time.

New years (and new decades!) are an opportunity to mark the ways that we grow. How have you grown over the last year. How have you grown over the last decade? How will you continue to grow in the year to come?

Grace and peace,
Pastor Marc