



*“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

Matthew 28: 19-20

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed, Alleluia! Our Lenten journeys are over and now we celebrate our Lord's resurrection. On April 9, 2023, our congregations held their Easter services which were well attended. Our sanctuaries were adorned with flowers and we raised our Alleluias. On April 16<sup>th</sup>, we heard the words of the Great Commission. We have been commissioned to go and make disciples, to baptize and to teach. And Matthew concluded his gospel with a reminder from Jesus, “And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” What a blessing and promise! Whatever we are facing, whether joy-filled or sorrowful, our Lord is with us.

My Lenten journey was one filled with joy, sorrow, fear, anxiety, anticipation, hope and vulnerability. It all began on the Monday before Ash Wednesday. I woke up with a cough, stuffy nose, aches, all the symptoms of Covid. I thought, “Please no God, Lent begins this week. I have services to lead, studies to prepare, work to do on my final papers for my training with the Pneuma Institute. I did not have time to be sick! By Wednesday, my symptoms included ear pain. I took three Covid tests. All negative. Thank God for that, but I was still sick. A virus, the doctor said. I had no idea that it would lead to hearing loss and an illness that would last almost two months.

During this time, I learned a lot about being vulnerable, about asking for and accepting help when needed. We are so blessed in PLUM to have a team of pastors who can step in to help at a moment's notice. We are blessed with Lay Leaders who can step in and lead worship. We are blessed with members who pray for each other, and I can attest to the fact that prayer works.

At this same time, I was finalizing my studies with Pneuma Institute. I had two major papers to write. Writing papers always brings a sense of anxiety

to me. I was worried that I wouldn't do my best writing because I wasn't feeling well. But, I was also anticipating my graduation which is scheduled for May 6<sup>th</sup>. This will be a joy-filled day, celebrating almost two years of study. I will be certified as a Spiritual Director and Spiritual Leader. I hope to use the knowledge and skills that I gained as another part of my ministry here at PLUM.

One of the greatest joys that I anticipated was the birth of my newest grandchild. My grandson was born on April 12, 2023. This is also the day that my right ear finally cleared and my hearing was completely restored. Alleluia!

I tell you all of this, because the words of Matthew ring true. I felt our Lord's presence with me throughout all of it. Whatever we face, we do not face it alone. We have God's promise that our Lord is with us always.

We are still in the Easter season. As we continue to celebrate the Resurrection of Our Lord, the pastoral team is planning our visits to our homebound members. A letter has been mailed out to our identified homebound members with a request to respond with some information. First, if anyone, homebound or not, wishes a visit from a pastor, please contact us! Our Gracious God has blessed us with many talents, but mind reading is not one of them! You will notice that our email addresses are changing. We are switching over to business email addresses in order to keep personal and pastoral messages separate. These new email addresses are included in this newsletter.

We would like to invite you to three summer gatherings. These will happen on the fourth Thursday of the month in June, July and August. The event will begin at 5:30 pm as we gather for food and fellowship, and it will conclude with evening prayer at 7:30. Look for the details of each of these gatherings on our PLUM website. Last year, we had a great time at each of the gatherings. It was great to have time to fellowship with our sister congregations. Please join us for one or all.

Our Southwest Pa Synod Assembly is being held on June 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. Each congregation is asked to recruit two members to attend the assembly. The June 16 gathering will be on Zoom. The Saturday, June 17 session will be held in person at Penn West (formerly California University). There is also the option to attend by Zoom on Saturday. Your pastoral team has

been invited to take on the role of chaplains for the assembly. We are very excited to do this and ask for your prayers as we prepare to lead the assembly in prayer.

Please continue to check the website ([www.plumofpa.com](http://www.plumofpa.com)) for updates on Bible studies, worship services and congregational news.

May you feel God's presence with you always,

Pastor Sue and your Pastoral Team

*“Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”*

Isaiah 41:10

New Email Addresses for the PLUM Pastoral Team:

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