

A Small Table Between Sundays

When I first came to First Friends, I began writing a monthly newsletter. I wanted us to have something more than a list of dates and announcements. I hoped it might help us know one another, recognize what God was doing among us, and remain connected between Sundays.

Over time, ministry became fuller. There were sermons to prepare, people to visit, classes to teach, meetings to attend, and concerns to carry in prayer. There was the life of Westminster, our work in the community, jail ministry, and the ordinary joys and sorrows of being a church family. I completed my Doctor of Ministry and continued developing the *Flow of Holiness*—work that has helped me see even more clearly that holiness is not a private achievement but a communal way of grace.

I was writing more than ever, but one of our shared places of connection grew quiet.

Now I would like to begin the newsletter again. I do not want simply to recreate what we did before. We are not going backward. We are recovering a useful rhythm—a small table between Sundays where we can gather around stories, Scripture, ministry updates, prayer, and the life Christ is forming among us.

There is already much to place on that table. A question Judy asked during a pastoral visit—“What will Heaven be like?”—has grown into a fourteen-week Bible study beginning August 19. Our recent Sundays have led us to the compassion of Jesus, who receives what we have and makes mercy visible through surrendered lives. We have also been reminded that Christ is near: the One who saves us, steadies us, and sends us carrying good news.

These are not separate projects. They are signs of one living movement: Christ drawing us toward himself and toward one another.

A newsletter cannot create fellowship, but it can help us notice fellowship. It can remind us to pray, invite us to participate, celebrate quiet acts of faithfulness, and help us see how the Spirit is moving through people and ministries we might otherwise overlook. Paul described Christian fellowship as a place where “you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith” (Romans 1:12 NIV). That is what I hope this newsletter can become.

Each month, I will offer a fresh reflection here. We will also include a brief echo from Sunday worship, opportunities to gather and serve, ministry updates, important dates, and a query for prayerful reflection. I hope you will help fill this small table with testimonies, photographs, concerns, and signs of grace.

We are beginning again—not because the past needs to be repeated, but because connection is worth tending.

Blessings and Peace,

Pastor Paul