



August 18, 2021

Dear Knox Friend,

Every year, we take time to pause and reflect on the impact of our church community which is made possible through your generous gifts of time, talent, and treasure. In this unprecedented year, our church community came together in new ways, brought hope in moments of great challenge, and was a witness to faith in action.

We would like to share with you what God is doing through Knox Church within our congregation and within our community so far this year. There are many amazing examples of ministry, faith, and outreach. We hope you will be encouraged and help us to celebrate what God is doing through the Knox flock.

Through the Deacons' Ministry:

- Connected with members who are largely homebound by delivering cookies at Christmas and Easter flowers.
- Continued the ministry of prayer: Sending hand-written cards of encouragement, congratulations, thanksgiving, sympathy; sending hand-knit bunnies to newborns; Prayers for Everyone ministry: praying for Knox members by name, short lists at a time, at each monthly Deacon meeting.
- Supported the bag lunch ministry through St. Frances Seraph by providing provisions for sandwich-making and as COVID-19 protocols evolved the sandwiches were made by our youth group.

Through Adult Faith Formation:

- Brought the Christmas story to life in our outside space with a Christmas Eve journey, including a live nativity.
- Mailed packages and family devotionals to bring Knox into the home of our Knox kids.
- Involved 100 members in Braver Angels' workshops for "Depolarizing Within" and "Skills for Bridging the Divide."
- Journey of faith with Fall Beatitudes including a return to in-person family events outdoors.

Through Worship and Music:

- Pre-recorded music for the Traditional worship services live-streaming and delayed online viewing. Since Palm Sunday, transitioned to a mix of live and prerecorded music, and by late May live music was featured in worship. It is our goal to have the 50-voice Knox Choir and Handbell Choir return to live worship in September 2021.
- Produced for the congregation and public three virtual Knox Music Series programs of sacred music featuring diverse musical styles – classical, folk hymns, and African American spirituals. These were premiered online.
- Installing new suspended microphones in the sanctuary to enhance audio quality and enable worship music from the front of the sanctuary to be broadcast real-time and recorded for delayed online listening.

Through Sunday School and Family Faith Formation:

- Expanded Knox "younger youth" group to include 5th-7th graders and this group continues to grow.
- Added a new FEAST worship which is a monthly kid-friendly worship experience.
- Offered a Parents' Night Out by the Knox childcare staff.
- Held listening sessions with 20 Knox families to hear how we can meet them where they are as things reopen.

Through Youth Ministry:

- Dedicated youth leaders led a remarkable youth group which continued in unique ways through remote meetings and socially distanced, masked gatherings.
- Knox Youth Group, with support of many Knox members, attended a Montreat Conference in North Carolina. The theme ***Called to Connect*** explored what it means to be called into a relationship with God and one another, even in the midst of things that disconnect us. Youth shared their experiences in the June 20 worship service.

Through Growth and Outreach Committee:

- Launching of Knox's virtual directory is underway. Full rollout to the congregation is expected early this fall.
- Continued live streamed or online worship service options. Also, we are currently working on upgrading both the technology and systems to improve our live stream experience for worship services.
- Rethinking in person events as we move to more face-to-face fellowship and plans for congregation wide events.
- Partnering with the Deacons to revamp our greeters' program, especially as transition back to in-person worship.

Through Mission and Social Concerns:

- Supported mission partners with \$350,000. During this challenging year, Knox also helped with \$50,000 for unique needs: provided Crossroad Health Center the capability for in-home health monitoring, monetary assistance to help homeless families, donations for emergency relief from natural disasters in the US and Central America, and additional support for Montreat.
- Implemented the new, Knox Benevolence Ministry. Building off of work previously done by the pastors, this ministry enables Knox members to assist neighbors requesting help from the church.
- Continued partnership with Third Church. A new basketball court and playground opened, active food ministry and mentoring programs continued, a COVID vaccination center provided a trusted neighborhood space. Also providing a venue for neighborhood, police and civic leaders to develop plans to address violence in the area. School supplies and backpacks for 100 children were collected and distributed; tutoring for children is resuming. Coming soon: the new HOPE center with job search and personal support resources.
- Conducted two fun Tailgating for Mission drives which enabled us to provide carloads of goods to IHN, Childhood Food Pantry, Adams County Food Pantry, Center for Respite Care, and Crossroad Health Center.

Through Racial Justice Ministry:

- Demonstrated commitment in January and February with 27 Knox congregants spending Sunday evenings Zooming to discuss the budding Racial Justice Ministry alongside outside facilitators with expertise in goal-setting.
- Devised with careful thought a set of principles and practices with the central theme of "listen, learn and act."
- Established Knox's Racial Justice Ministry by presenting a motion, formally approved by the Session in March. The new ministry connects to our church mission and the Mission and Social Concerns Committee.

Through Personnel Committee:

- Hired a Communication & Technology Specialist; developing a welcome packet for onboarding new employees.
- Updating job descriptions for the staff and work is underway on a new performance and evaluation process.

Through Budget and Finance:

- Continued to routinely monitor all Knox financial accounts to assure accurate reporting and that spending is in accordance with Session and donor wishes.
- Concluded a satisfactory evaluation of seven Agreed-Upon-Procedures by an external CPA firm.

Through Buildings and Grounds:

- Provided oversight and guidance for health protocols during the COVID epidemic: assisted in developing safe seating plan for worship; enhanced cleaning of worship and music spaces; improved ventilation systems and HVAC in the nursery school; purchased and maintained supplies for cleaning, disinfecting, and masks.
- Improved landscaping for the outdoor experience: Added trees and flowers along Michigan Avenue.

We hope you have enjoyed reading about the many ways that your Knox Church has an impact. This past year was challenging and full of change due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our worship services, ministries, and programs have evolved to provide various ways to reach people where they are and provide support and assistance as needed. We give thanks and remember that God is unchanging through our changes and a source of all blessings.

With joy and gratitude,

Elizabeth McGann, Joyce Steiner, Jeff Taylor, Neal Brower, and Debi Haines
Your Knox Stewardship Team