

All Church Conference  
First Palo Alto United Methodist Church  
December, 2021

Dear friends in Christ,

We have much to give thanks for this year. You have weathered the last year+ quite well and kept shepherding the church in many important ways through technology, Zoom meetings, committee decision making and figuring the best way to shelter the buildings and congregation. You have stepped up in this literal time of crisis in the world. The Conference, DS, Pastors and congregation give thanks for these efforts. They do not go unnoticed. You are a blessing.

I must confess that my reaction throughout the pandemic this last year has been one of turning inward, dropping out, while feeling stunned into non-action. Like many people, depression has been nearby and social contacts have been very limited. One more confession... I actually counted the number of Netflix series I watched in a year... not episodes but whole series of episodes and it totaled more than 50 different titles. So, as you can see, I have been holed up in my little nest, perhaps in denial, certainly in fear and inaction.

My limited ministry activities (besides daily prayer for you all) have included:

- Zoom attendance at the Gathering of Orders Retreat, complete with an actual lunch provided and delivered to my door as a treat from this congregation and Conference.
- The Congregational Care Committee organized a group of us to contact those church members who either live alone, may be isolated or would like regular phone visits. I reached several people monthly and we enjoyed fellowship and connection together by phone calls.
- I prepared and gave the church message on Mother's Day, while Pastor Murray was away. This was a Zoom effort with technical help given by others, with whom I am eternally grateful.
- Over a month or two, I conferred with church members, spoke with El Camino District Superintendent and a clergy colleague on matters at the church.
- In October I participated in the Zoom El Camino District Conference.

May the future of the Church recover, finding new and strengthened purpose to be a beacon of hope for all people. With God's help we can do all things, in Christ's Name,

Rev. Karen Paulsen,  
Retired Elder, Cal Nevada Conference  
United Methodist Church