

IN THE INTERIM

Although our church year begins with Advent and the calendar year starts on January 1st, September always feels like the real start of a new year because of the start of academic institutions. Fortunate are Jewish people, who were fated to celebrate Rosh Hashanah (their new year) in September. First Church re-gathers for Homecoming worship with our choir on September 8th at 10:30 am. We understand that the season of growing in the Spirit continues unabated.

Our congregation had a very good summer, barring personal losses, what with our annual meeting last June; officers, boards and committees taking hold; the Good Ol' Summertime Fair and the new Strawberry Social with Swing Band being wonderful successes in spirit and outreach. We also increased our worship attendance, enjoyed a variety of guest musicians, held a Cabinet retreat, reached out to the community in different ways, edited our website, made plans to transition our *Midweek Message* and *Beacons*, and updated our membership directory.

We regret the major tornado that hit Harwich Center this past July. Though the church sustained tree loss and minor property damage, we righted ourselves, thanks to the help of leaders and strangers.

Having conducted five Lenten Bible sessions, six Interim Focus Groups last winter and spring, and twelve 8:30 am services this past summer, I look forward to resuming our Interim Focus Groups this fall. They will be focused on a variety of different subjects including two about the Pastor Parish Relations Committee, visioning in all areas of church life, as well as helping to organize some adult education sessions,

which will be open to our members and the community. For example, on Wednesday, September 25th from 1-3 pm in the Parish Hall, I invite any members, especially snow birds, who were unable to attend any IFG sessions last year to join me to discuss our church so everyone can get on the same page and start afresh to rebuild our church.

On September 8th we, interim pastor and members, will also commission our deacons for their service this year. From there we will be off and running.

Growth in Spirit is our theme this season as we look for ways to grow our numbers and spirit in our congregation. As we do this, we will discover that we must reach out into our communities of Harwich, Brewster and other towns, and, thereby, meet likeminded religious people and be able to invite them to join us in Christ's ministry of mercy and justice. Join us this year!

Grace and peace,

Pastor Dianne