

2024-2025 Senior Pastor Annual Report

Greetings,

As we reflect on this past year, we are reminded of God's faithful presence among us. Though we have faced both joys and challenges, the Spirit has continued to move, breathe new life, and invite us deeper into faithful witness in this corner of Quincy. I am grateful for each of you and the ways you embody Christ's love in our congregation and community.

Together, we celebrate many signs of hope, growth, and transformation. Below are some highlights from the year:

Worship

Worship has remained the heartbeat of our community life.

- Our services have been deeply meaningful, with many commenting on the Spirit's presence among us.
- Special moments included the baptisms of Grace Annalie Jean-Baptiste and Wrenley Davenport, intentional times of anointing at the altar, and powerful music selections by our worship leaders.
- In February, we centered Black voices and experiences through a celebration of music from the Black tradition — Spirituals, Blues, Jazz, and Hip Hop — connecting worship to liberation and history.
- We celebrated Christmas Eve with several visitors, and continued worship through two significant snow storms via Zoom, faithfully gathering even when weather made travel unsafe.
- We remain committed to creating a welcoming, Spirit-filled space for all who enter our community.

Discipleship

Spiritual formation remains vital to our shared life.

- This past year our adult Sunday School explored practices of balance and Sabbath, Richard Foster's *Celebration of Discipline*, the Nazarene Advent curriculum *Changed in the Waiting*, and journeyed through the season of Lent by reflecting on lectionary texts.
- The teens journeyed through Genesis in Sunday school under Pastor Brad's leadership and Luke at Teen Extreme under Pastor Lisa's leadership.
- Children were guided through Advent themes, the Fruit of the Spirit, and Lent themes by Pastor Al and Pastor Fredrick.

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- During Lent, we collaborated with North Street Community Church for evening Bible studies, fostering deeper connections between our congregations. Special thanks to our Our Bible quizzers for leading Scripture readings during these gatherings.
- The Lent Writing Project, *Renewal: Journey to the Cross*, was created in partnership with other district leaders, offering resources to churches across New England and beyond.

Fellowship

Our life together has been enriched by joyful gatherings.

- Highlights included our Holiday Gathering, the Harvest Dinner, Game Nights, Love and Jersey Sunday, and a Teen Lock-In, providing spaces for connection, laughter, and shared stories.
- Over thirty people joined our Holiday Gathering, and our fellowship events continue to build community across generations.

Mission

We have sought to embody Christ's compassion and justice through tangible acts of service:

- Ongoing collections for food, toiletries, and clothing benefited the Germantown Neighborhood Center.
- Our Gather and Sow initiative overflowed with donations, providing resources for those in need.
- We participated in Stay and Serve projects, hosted Pastor Steven from Rwanda for a missions weekend, and observed the Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church.
- Through Mission Moments, we heard powerful testimonies about global mission work, immigration justice, and Nazarene Compassionate Ministries.

District and Community Connections

We remain an active partner in both district and local initiatives:

- Bethel hosted NYI District Bible Quizzing and the District License Renewal Interviews.
- Five of our staff were recommended for license renewal — a testament to the gifted leadership among us (Tiffany, Al, Lisa, Brad, and Abby).
- We helped coordinate a Transgender Day of Remembrance Vigil with the Quincy Interfaith Network, showing solidarity and compassion to our wider community.
- I continue to serve as the Vice Chair of the New England District Board of Ministry and co-president of the Quincy Interfaith Network.

New Initiatives

- We received a \$3,000 grant from Point Loma to lead a teen pilgrimage experience in the Quincy/Boston area this summer. Thank you to I'Esha for agreeing to lead this exciting opportunity!

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- We have embarked on a church-wide discernment process, focusing on **Prayer and Planning for God's Provision**, as we seek God's vision for Bethel's future. As part of this process we are working with Derek Taylor from Point Loma Nazarene University's Center for Pastoral Leadership to assist with the discernment process.

Financial Update

We give thanks for God's provision through the faithful generosity of this community.

- After requesting special one-time gifts, we successfully raised \$10,000, allowing us to end the fiscal year *in the black* — with a surplus of \$336.76!
- 36% of the gifts came from regular attenders, 44% from former attenders, and 20% from new or anonymous supporters.
- While we celebrate this, we are mindful of ongoing financial challenges ahead and are committed to prayerfully making wise and faithful decisions to secure our future.

In Closing

The past year has been a season of stretching, celebration, and hopeful reimagining. Even amidst grief, transition, and uncertainty, God is at work — making beautiful things out of dust.

Thank you for your faithful prayers, service, generosity, and witness. It is a privilege to serve as your pastor.

With gratitude and hope,
Pastor Mat