There is a Chinese curse that goes “may you live in interesting times”. Well, it certainly has been interesting and rather trying this year.

It got off to a quick start at the annual congregational meeting in Jan of 2020 with Father Jim announcing his retirement to take affect at the end of May. This was a shock, but we would carry on.

During February, COVID-19 emerged. But we carried on. In March, face-to-face worship was curtailed by direction of the Diocese but, we carried on.

In June we bade farewell to Jim and Dale as they relocated to Pennsylvania to start retired life and we began having outdoor services (Morning Prayer) and we carried on.

Bishop Ted Gulick (ret) came to be supply priest one Sunday and we reached an agreement for Ted to become our interim priest while we are in the search process, and we carried on.

Bishop Ted submitted a plan to the Diocese of a process for being able to perform Communion and distribute the elements that was approved, and we carried on.

The Discernment Committee was formed with members from both Grace and St Luke’s in Remington to initiate the search process to call a new rector. They will provide a separate report of the details of the search. …And we carried on.

Bishop Ted and I developed a plan and seating chart for a proposed return to indoor services using the Parish Hall and submitted to the Diocese for approval. The plan was approved but was provisional on the local infection rate being below 5%, which it has not been since the approval of the plan, but we carried on.

Outdoor services continued into fall when the infection rate in Virginia took a drastic rise and by direction of the Diocese, we ceased face-to-face services. We were able to have an Advent 3 service and a Christmas day service but have not been able to meet since. Bishop Ted has made an inquiry about having a “drive-in” service but as yet we have not gotten any response, but we carry on.

It has certainly been a trying year for me as the Sr Warden, especially without a rector to help direct things. In the first paragraph, I referenced the Chinese curse, but I have been blessed to have the help and support of the members of the Vestry as well has a few folks that I look to for advice and input. I won’t go into names here for fear that I might miss someone but, hopefully you know who you are. One name that I **will** mention is Bishop Ted. I don’t know how I would have gotten through this year without him. At the beginning of each Vestry meeting we request that folks bring forth examples of God’s grace and I brought up Ted a few months ago. It was grace that brought Ted back to Grace Church after his first job here, 61 years ago as organist.

In addition to the COVID-19 infection, this year has been fraught with turmoil and controversary and hopefully the year ahead will be brighter.

And, we carry on.

Submitted faithfully,

Bryan Jacobs

Sr Warden