



## Pastor Narrative Charge Conference Report

Date: October 8, 2021

**Pastor: Rev. Ryan Mark Schaeffer**

**Charge: Ghent**

Please provide a narrative of your pastoral ministry since the last Charge Conference. ("to give an account of their pastoral ministry to the charge and annual conference according to the prescribed forms", ¶340. c, 2b, Book of Discipline).

Response

This past Charge Conference year has been one of sadness and yet great hope. Last fall I was serving Fieldstone and Asbury UMC in Christiansburg. We were full of hope as we had just begun having outdoor worship and were able to worship together for the first time in 6 months. I continued to lead a small group study in which we finished reading "Celebration of Discipline" by Richard Foster and then went on to read "What is the Bible" by Rob Bell. I was very encouraged to see the spiritual and relational growth within this group during our time together.

In January, Fieldstone met to discuss the financial crisis they were facing with the inability to pay their bills. It was decided that they would either have to merge with another congregation or close. Conversations were had with Asbury UMC about a potential merger but it was decided that merger would not be the best option and that Fieldstone would formally close at the end of the Annual Conference year. This decision meant that my family and I would have to move as Asbury would once again be a part time appointment. Fieldstone closing and leaving Asbury brought sorrow to both congregations and myself. Much of my last few months in Christiansburg was worshiping online and having final pastoral care visits to say farewell.

Coming to Ghent has brought my family and I renewed hope. Ghent UMC is a church with a passion to try new things and has been a great fit for my ministry gifts. These first few months my focus has been getting acquainted with the church and community, pastoral care, and discernment. We are planning on starting a youth group and a pastor-led Bible Study in the coming weeks. I look forward with great hope to where God will lead us in ministry!