To the people of Bethlehem Stonepile UMC and Springvale UMC:

There are many changes that the Covid19 pandemic has brought to our society. And those changes have certainly reached into our spiritual lives and the life of our churches. The way we worship has changed – at least for a time. I never thought I would be sharing sermons online. I’m too old for this! And the changes are not over yet. One of the ministry opportunities that is still up in the air is the planned Mission Trip to Tarboro, North Carolina. Last year seven people made that trip, and came back to share their story. This year some 39 people had signed up for that mission opportunity. That is fantastic! In this note I just want to say – “Don’t give up yet!” We are still waiting to hear from the North Carolina Conference whether going is still a possibility. And some of you may have to change your mind about going for any number of reasons since this pandemic has made parts of life so difficult. But I just want to remind you of what you can experience. I have said that the Mission Trip week the church I was serving took was my favorite week of the year. We made trips to Henderson Settlement; Red Bird Mission; White Oak Center; War, West Virginia; and JAARS ( which was a part of Wycliffe Bible Translators). Today I want to share a bit of Hawaii Pidgin that I was given on one of our JAARS trips. It is a translation of John 3: 16-17. You know those verses: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.” (NIV)

Now hear them in Hawaii Pidgin: (Have to read carefully.)

“God wen get so plenny love an ahoha fo da peopo inside da world, dat he went send me, his one an ony Boy so dat everybody dat trus me no get cut off from God, BUT GET DA REAL KINE LIFE DAT STAY TO DA MAX FOREVA.

You know, God neva send me, his Boy, inside da world fo punish da peopo. He went send me fo take da place outa do bad kine stuff dey doing.”

You never know what spiritual insight you pick up on a Mission Trip. We can get “da real kind life that can stay to da max forever.”

That is my hope for all of you – whether the Mission Trip happens this year or not – that you can have a relationship with God that can stay to the max forever.

Joy and Peace,

Pastor Bud

P.S. Don’t forget to do a “virtual passing of the peace” for this Sunday. Email it to the Charge Office.