



March 6, 2016

GIVE A BLESSING...BE A BLESSING!*Message from Rev. Wanda D. Craner written February 24, 2016*

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

"My only desire is to make these words reverberate in every corner of your being –'You are the Beloved.'" These words are those of Henri Nouwen, and they are mine for you as well! This will be the final Communitas article that I will write as your Minister of Spiritual Nurture of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference. This week I will make the transition to a new ministry, still focused on prayer, healing, spiritual formation, worship, Gestalt Pastoral Care and spiritual direction. I am excited for how God may shape this ministry in the future, and I also experience some sadness as I will not be seeing some of you as often as I have in the past.

My parting thoughts have to do with blessing. Again, I share words from Henri Nouwen: "To give a blessing is to affirm, to say 'yes' to a person's belovedness. And more than that: to give a blessing creates the reality of which it speaks." I believe our Jewish brothers and sisters understand the power of blessing in ways that many of us have yet to fully understand. I have witnessed the power of blessing as healing hands are laid on those receiving prayer. I have seen the positive shifts in children and young people as a parent begins their day by blessing them, with words like, "Have a good day at school, and remember, I believe in you, I love you... God loves you!" When congregations have sincerely received the benediction (the blessing) at the end of worship, as their Pastor raises his/her hands in a gesture of care and invitation to go out into the world to be a blessing, I have noticed a new light- heartedness, and often, a ray of new hope and conviction.

So, my brothers and sisters: May God bless you with a sense of how very precious you are in God's eyes. May you see every one of your neighbors as God sees them. May you be granted the grace of wise discernment as you make decisions in your individual lives, as well as in your congregational lives. May you move into the future according to God's timing and with the sure of the guidance of the Holy Spirit. May you be given the courage to help all to see themselves as beloved, especially those who daily face isolation, rejection, and injustice. May the creativity of God be among you, so that the faith community of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference may be a witness of compassion and holy truth to the world. God bless you, as you bless others!

-Rev. Wanda D. Craner, PSEC Minister of Spiritual Nurture (As of March 1, Rev. Craner may be reached via the website: gestaltpastoralcare.org.)

CALLING ALL PSEC WOMEN WHO LOVE TO SING

All Women of Pennsylvania Southeast Conference are invited to participate in a special Women's Choir that will sing at the Friday evening worship of the Spring Meeting on Friday, June 10 at West Chester University. Rehearsal will be held prior to the service. Please indicate your interest in singing in the choir when you register for the Spring Meeting. Anthems: *The Gift of Love* by Hal Hopson - SSA and *Dancin' at the Rock* by Donald Moore - SSA.

PSEC SPRING YOUTH EVENT - APRIL 15-17 at South Mountain YMCA Camp

Show yourself in all respects a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, gravity." -Titus 2:7

Join us for the 2016 PSEC Spring Youth Event at **South Mountain YMCA Camp**, 201 Cushion Peak Road in Reinholds, PA 17569. The event is open to youth ages 13-18. The fee of \$90 per person covers meals, lodging, events, and activities. Visit the PSEC website to download and complete the Medical, Assumption of Risks and Permission form and/or a flier to share. Bring the medical form on April 15. Please do not email the form in advance. **Register online by April 3.**

REQUEST FROM SANDY STRAUSS, PA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

We have a newly developed curriculum "Loving Our Brothers and Sisters: A Study for Youth on Bullying, Violence, and Prevention in a Christian Context" in final draft form and are looking for a few congregations to test it and give us feedback before we release the final form. There are 3 sessions (designed for a 3-week period) that use videos and other ideas for engaging youth. If you wish to serve as a test congregation, contact me at (717) 545-4761 or s.strauss@pachurches.org. Thanks for your help!

GUESS LEAVING LOCAL CHURCH MINISTRIES FOR CHHSM VICE-PRESIDENCY

The Rev. J. Bennett Guess, executive minister of the United Church of Christ's Local Church Ministries, is resigning his position as national officer on April 8, 2016, to assume a new role as vice president of the UCC's Council for Health and Human Service Ministries. Read more: visit ucc.org and search for **Guess Leaving**.

NEW ASSOCIATE CONFERENCE MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS TO SERVE CT, MA, AND RI CONFERENCES

The Conference Ministers in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island today announced the appointment of Tiffany Vail as the new Associate Conference Minister for Communications, serving all three of the UCC conferences of Southern New England. "We are excited about this new position sharing opportunity," said the three Conference Ministers in their message today, "and we welcome Tiffany to this new role among our three Conferences!" Read more: visit macucc.org and click on the article title.



Prayers are requested for Trinity Christian UCC in Skippack and Rev. Michael W. Evans.