



May 15, 2016

## *From your Conference Minister :*

If we didn't know it before, we surely know it now, as the second chapter of Acts unfolds: this is no tame God who comes to us, no safe and predictable deity-- certainly not the one we worship from safe and predictable pews. This is the God whose loving sometimes takes the form of scorching. And should. There are fears, "-isms", and cynical spirits that need to be burned away from the Christian life.

Before he left, Jesus told his friends he would send them the Advocate, the Comforter. Now the Comforter comes as wind and flame, reminding us that comfort is not always comfortable. It makes itself known in community, where we find the most searing challenges—and the deepest blessings—we will ever know.

Jan Richardson's writes about that blessing in a manner that's particularly relevant for all our churches: "To bear this blessing, you must first take yourself to a place where everyone does not look like you or think like you, a place where they do not believe precisely as you believe, where their thoughts and ideas and gestures are not exact echoes of your own.

Bring your sorrow. Bring your grief. Bring your fear. Bring your weariness, your pain, your disgust at how broken the world is, how fractured, how fragmented by its fighting, its wars, its hungers, its penchant for power, its ceaseless repetition of the history it refuses to rise above. I will not tell you this blessing will fix all that.

But in the place where you have gathered, wait, watch, listen. Lay aside your inability to be surprised, your resistance to what you do not understand. See then whether this blessing turns to flame on your tongue, sets you to speaking what you cannot fathom or opens your ear to a language beyond your imagining that comes as a knowing in your bones that...this is the reason we were made, for this ache that finally opens us, for this struggle, this grace that scorches us toward one another and into the blazing day."

The world is waiting and wondering, 'Is there any fire left in the belly of the body of Christ? Does anything ignite their souls? Are we still the carriers of the grace that keeps the world? Today is our day to offer the world a resounding "YES!"

Rev. William P. Worley  
Conference Minister

## *Getting to Know :*

### **Collenbrook United Church**

5290 Township Line Road, Drexel Hill, PA



Collenbrook United Church, UCC/PCUSA, is a union church of Northminster Presbyterian Church and St. Paul's United Church of Christ 41 years ago. As a union church we are one congregation while fully a part of both denominations.

Collenbrook United Church is an OPEN AND AFFIRMING/MORE LIGHT congregation. We

welcome, accept, include, affirm, and celebrate all of God's people into full participation and membership regardless of race, color, ethnicity, age, gender, marital status, physical or mental abilities, sexual orientation, gender identity, economic or cultural background, or any other socially limiting barrier. It is our mission to be a safe place for all people to explore faith, grow spiritually, and participate fully in the life of this faith community. We also covenant to support and work toward a time when discrimination of all kinds is eliminated from our churches and our communities. Peace and justice for all of God's people and God's creation are crucial to us.

Collenbrook United Church is a MISSION church. Each month we choose a different mission for focus. In 2015, some of our mission offerings included: Doctors Without Borders, Church World Service: Blankets Plus, Life Philadelphia, One Great Hour of Sharing, THON, The Point Foundation (ONA/ML), Chester Eastside, Marine Corp League, KIVA, CROP Walk, Neighbors in Need, Thanksgiving Food Drive, and Retired Clergy Funds UCC/PCUSA. Our newest mission has been to provide a free hot meal the last Thursday of the month for anyone and everyone in the community, served in our Fellowship Hall from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Our recent purchase of three octaves of handbells is enhancing our worship in exciting ways! We are also hosting Jamie Anderson in Concert on May 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 p.m. Watch for us in the Pride Parade!

Like us on Facebook to stay up-to-date on our current events!



Prayers are requested for Collenbrook United Church in Drexel Hill and Rev. Melanie J. Lawrence-Caldwell.