

Report from the PSEC Moderator
The Rev. Steven Hamilton
April 9, 2016

Spirit Filled. Acts 2:1-21

Greetings in the name of the Risen Christ!

As I write this, our celebration of *Pentecost* is but a few days away. Our scriptures from the *Acts of the Apostles* center on the disciples gathered together. Suddenly there was the overwhelming rush of wind and what seemed to be tongues of fire touching each one and then...all the words of separation were gone. Even today, when the touch of the Spirit is realized, we can experience overwhelming awe. Perhaps, we, the body of Christ expressed here as the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference (PSEC) of the United Church of Christ, are again, not so far removed from apostles' experience of the Spirit.

We have experienced much as we grow into the call of the Spirit, as this part of the body of Christ and in this place. We have prayed for God's blessing and given thanks for the gifts of ministry shared with us by Sam Brackeen, the Rev. Wanda Craner, Marge Stadnycki, and Donna Tomlinson as they left to pursue their passions and gifts; and we welcome Barbara Guido as our Conference Vice-Moderator as she completes Sam's terms as Vice-Moderator and Personnel Committee Chair; Susan Creswell, *Executive Assistant for Conference Communication and to the Conference Minister*; and Brea Rarick, *Conference Registrar and Assistant for Search and Call*, as they share their gifts in ministry with this expression of the body of Christ.

The joys and challenges grow as we grow in bringing forth our **2020 Vision**. Many of our churches are seeking how they in their missions and ministries, will support our **2020 Vision's** objectives and goals. We also are partnering with the *Center for Progressive Renewal* to provide resources and guidance for congregations to grow fully into their discernment and development of their ministries and mission. And a team has worked diligently to identify and suggest needed changes to our Conference's *Constitution and Bylaws*, which will be presented for discussion and vote during our Spring Meeting.

In the not too distant past, we struggled deeply financially. This changed significantly as we sold property and retired our debt. A blessed sign of this is that our ministries continue, though in different and growing forms, and an invitation has now been issued to churches to apply for *New Ministries* financial seed and nurturing of up to \$15,000. *God is Still Speaking*,

Some of us within our Conference and our Associations are discerning how these respective expressions of the body of Christ will live into the future. Conversations and Spirit guided movement continue.

I have been deeply blessed for the opportunity to serve God with all of you! Thank you.

Life is sometimes messy and the Spirit does unexpectedly call for us to speak and act in ways that oftentimes create wonder and awe. The Living Christ is present among us. We are in a wondrous time of being and becoming church called by the Spirit. May God's grace, mercy, and love enfold us and the Spirit guide us always. Amen.

Blessings,
Rev. Steven Hamilton
PSEC Moderator

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