

Moderator's Report

Jennie Strauch

April 2019

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

It is hard to believe that I am coming to the end of my first year as Moderator and what a year it has been. It has truly been a year of education.

That education began by meeting the Conference staff and learning their roles and responsibilities. They are not only a very gifted group of people but they perform their responsibilities with dedication to their specific roles as well as to the mission of the conference and church. They have offered wonderful guidance and assistance to me and for that I am truly grateful.

While I have served several years on the Conference Consistory, as Moderator, the education of the responsibilities of the Consistory has intensified and has given me the opportunity to attend various committee meetings where I have learned, in detail, the work that supports the conference. I recognize the value of the people who serve voluntarily on these committees as they lend their time and talents to guide and provide advise in these areas. I also extend that appreciation to each member of the Conference Consistory. These volunteers not only serve on the Consistory but many of them, both clergy and lay, are active in specific committees and their local Associations. Our meetings have focused on the overall workings of the conference and how we can be in covenant with the local churches, continuing with the five objectives from the 20/20 vision as selected by the Consistory in 2017. This year was also the year that we continually reviewed the progress of the Joint Conference Vision and Development Team (JCVDT). This team composed of representatives of the PSEC and the PNEC worked diligently to provide a vision for our fall conference meeting of what a new conference might look like and where God might lead us. I thank those members of the JCVDT for the many hours they gave and the lengthy discernment that they participated in to provide this vision to the members of both the PNEC and PSEC fall meetings.

The January 2019 meeting of the Consistory was expanded into a mini-retreat to review and discuss the events of the PSEC fall meeting regarding the vision of a creation of a new conference in Eastern Pennsylvania. Using the book "Better Together" by Tomberlin and Bird and several other sources, the Consistory discussed and prayed for God to show us His vision for our Conferences. I was grateful for the sharing of honest feelings, points of view, thoughts and dreams for both conferences by the members of Consistory. At the conclusion of our meeting it was decided that both conferences needed some time to reflect on where our journeys would take us. We look forward to continuing our relationship with PNEC in working together in several areas such as missions to Puerto Rico and Disaster

relief and recovery. We pray that God will lay on our hearts Her mission for our Conferences as both continue our faith journeys.

The last area of education that I would like to share has been the greatest blessing and joy to me. While I have been a member of the UCC denomination all my life, there are many churches within our conference that I do not know. So as I started this journey as Moderator, I wanted to get to know as many members and churches within the Conference as I could. Last August I set out to visit churches several Sundays each month. I began in the Philadelphia Association as it was the furthest from my home and have continued to North Penn and Covenant Associations, with Ursinus soon to follow. Having been moderator of the Schuylkill Association I am fairly acquainted with the majority of its churches, but have had the opportunity to visit some of these churches for special events. As I said earlier, this journey has been a blessing and joy for me. I have worshiped in many different types of settings with a diversity of worship styles. I have been welcomed into the worship service to greet each congregation and thank all for their support of the Conference and remind them of the support the Conference can offer them as they continue their faith journeys. I have loved all the worship styles from traditional to a blend of traditional and contemporary to totally new and different forms of worship as well as the diversity of our congregations. Each visit was moving and meaningful for me.

I have found that no matter the size or diversity of the congregation, whether urban or rural, all have several things in common. Not all worshippers are on time or sit up front! But all follow God's call to serve their fellow human beings whether in their community or around the world and they worship their God and Savior Jesus Christ, trying to follow his example.

If I have not journeyed to your church yet and you would like me to attend a worship service or a special event please feel free to e-mail me at jenniestrauch@gmail.com. I look forward to meeting many more of you within this coming year.

Thank you to all of you as individuals and churches who continue to support the Conference in various ways and encourage me along this journey as Moderator. Your encouragement and support have been greatly appreciated. I look forward to an exciting year ahead as God calls the PSEC to serve and "make disciples of all nations...in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit".

Blessings,

Jennie Strauch
PSEC Moderator