



December 29, 2019

Bringing in the New Year

New Year's Eve is one of the great party days of the year. I know people who start planning on January 1, where they will be on December 31, to bring in the new year. Who doesn't want to be at the best party, with the best music and the best people!

For as long as I can remember I have spent New Year's Eve evening... in church. In fact, I think I can say without exaggeration that at the stroke of midnight for all 45 New Year's Eves of my life, I have been on my knees, praying in church. This practice was so engrained in my understanding of spirituality that even when I was in college and could have decided to attend a number of parties, I still made my way to Bethel AME, Tallahassee, to hear Bishop Adam Jefferson Richardson, pray in the new year.

In the Black Church we call it Watchnight Service. The history of Watchnight traces its roots to December 31, 1862, when African American's all over the United States gathered in churches, waiting for word regarding their impending freedom. Click here (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ESm9Mdj3yQ8>) for a video about this history. There is an element of Watchnight that also comes from the Wesley Brothers, who encouraged followers of the early Methodist tradition to gather in churches, instead of bars, to bring in the new year.

Watchnight is now one of my favorite worship services of the year. It is a celebration of what God has already done and an anticipatory praise for what is waiting in the new year. More than anything else, being on my knees in prayer, as the clock strikes midnight, gathered with my family, just seems like the right thing to do. Even if Watchnight is not a part of your tradition, offering a midnight prayer, along with your toast and kiss, just might seem like the right thing to do!

- Rev. Cean James, PSEC Associate Conference Minister
 for Congregational Development

ALICE Training Opportunities Available

Alert—Lockdown—Inform—Counter—Evacuate

Our PSEC ALICE Trainer, Paul Hightower, will be hosting two ALICE Training Events early in 2020. The training workshop will help prepare your church for an active shooter event. The training will include an eLearning component, which will require internet access, that participants would complete prior to the workshop.

Cost of the workshop will be \$25 per attendee.

Workshop times will be 9:00 am—12:00 noon.

The two options for this training will be:



February 22nd @ Zion Blue Mountain, Strausstown

Register at : <https://psecalicefeb20.eventbrite.com>

March 7th @ First UCC, Quakertown

Register at: <https://https://psecalicemar20.eventbrite.com>

Prior to the event, attendees will receive a link to take the eLearning component of the class.

Please limit participation from your church to no more than two individuals so that more churches can participate.

**** If your church participated in the 2019 events, please allow other churches to participate in the 2020 events.**



The PSEC will close books for 2019

as of the close of business on

January 17, 2020. All OCWM

contributions and pass-throughs for 2019 must be received by our office by the close of business on Friday,

January 17, 2020 in order to be counted as a 2019 contribution.

