



April 19, 2020

2020 PSEC Annual Spring Meeting - **CANCELLED!**

It is with heavy hearts that the PSEC Planning Team has made the decision to cancel the 2020 PSEC Annual Spring Meeting that was scheduled to take place June 4-6, 2020 at the Inn at Reading in Reading PA.

The committee is working on plans for a possible one day gathering of fellowship and worship to take place some time after the end of this time of self distancing.



May 2nd Class
 "Let's Brainstorm"
 Cancelled

Cancellation of Additional PSEC Events

These are certainly uncertain and unprecedented times and since we do not have a crystal ball, we simply are unsure when it will be safe to hold events once again. In the meantime, please check in on our website calendar to see if our PSEC events are cancelled, postponed or perhaps being held via zoom. To access the website calendar, please do the following:

Go to: psec.org

Click on the "Events & News" Tab

Click on the "calendar"

Essential Life-Giving Ministry

In Pennsylvania, churches are considered essential, life-sustaining businesses, but we are so much more than life-sustaining, through the Holy Spirit we are *life-giving*, a sentiment especially noted with the "valley of dry bones" (Ezekiel 37:1-14) being a lection this Lent. In the midst of social distancing, churches continue to have a critical life-giving role in connecting people in living relationship with the loving God and sharing the hope of Jesus Christ. But, it is not just pastors seeking to bring worship, prayer, and study into people's homes through new technologies; it is a time for all of us, as the Body of Christ, to be a means of life-giving hope, help, and connection to *both* our members *and* our community. I'm overjoyed each and every time someone asks, "How can I help?" or says, "Send me!" Throughout history, the Christian church has been at its best, not when it has lauded itself self-righteously over others, but when it has humbly reached out and served in times of great need - especially in places and times and to people where and to whom no one else would. This is such a time when God calls upon us to reach out to our neighbors in safe, appropriate, self-giving, creative, intentional, meaningful, and Spirit led ways.

Immediately following 9/11, I witnessed churches offer amazing support through vigils, prayers, and aid. Throughout the nation, attendance in the pews swelled for three weeks, as people reordered their priorities and sought out God in a time of great national need. After those three weeks, attendance returned to normal. Why? One common understanding is churches were not ready to receive, connect, and follow up well with those who came.

There will come a time when this social distancing will end. It will be a time of celebration, no doubt. A time when people will want to give thanks to God. A time when people will return to those churches whose members showed that they were there with them in the midst of this pandemic. Now is not only the time to discern how is God calling us to meet current needs, but it is also the time to begin preparing for the prodigal return after the crisis is over, because if history repeats itself, we have no more than three Sundays to have an extravagant welcome, follow up, and connection with God's returning children.

We are called to a life-giving ministry, not just in the midst of a crisis, but throughout the year in all the ups and downs of everyday life. We are all called to a life-giving ministry, not just the church staff and leaders, but all of us as disciples of Christ and members of the Priesthood of *All Believers*. How is God calling you as a disciple to be a source of hope, comfort, and support at this time? How are our churches preparing for the joyous day when God's people will come together celebrate the end of social distancing?

May all of our churches be known as essential and life-giving by the communities in which we serve.

"Prophesy to these bones... Prophesy to the breath... that they may live!"

Your Fellow Disciple in Christ,

The Rev. Dr. Benjamin Motz, Pastor/Teacher of St. Paul's UCC Robesonia