



November 29, 2020

Recap of PSEC Fall Meeting

I remain grateful for all the work and effort put into creating a Conference Fall Zoom meeting by the officers and the members of Conference Consistory. I'm also grateful for the work of Sue Creswell and Rev. John Folk to help us into the meeting. The folks on our Conference tech team and the tech team at New Goshenhoppen UCC were amazing in a crisis moment. Rev. Tony Villareal did a great job moderating his first Conference meeting. Together, we facilitated a faithful gathering. The reports of our task forces were sources of deep inspiration for many. I am so very proud of, and humbled by, the people who are committed to those efforts. The work of the Addiction Task Force, taken seriously, may very well save lives. The anti-racist statement from the Jeremiah Walker Racial Justice Task Force is one of the best I've read from around our denomination. I am very pleased that our Conference investments will soon be Fossil Fuel free and to that end, and with inspiration from our Climate Justice Task Force, I've started searching for an electric 4-wheel drive vehicle.

At Sunday's meeting I said that as COVID 19 cases grow rapidly in our area, it is important that we consider moving back to virtual worship only. I know that some have already made that decision while many never left virtual only services. I continue to counsel, caution, encourage, implore you to please err on the side of being safe, and keeping safe, those with whom you work and worship. For us that is not a political statement it is a response to the very call on our lives by Jesus to protect and care for the most vulnerable among us.

I spoke about the effect the pandemic is having on churches that have been discerning the future of their ministry that include decisions about bringing their ministry to a close. David Schoen (UCC Church Building and Loan Fund) has written a brief piece regarding church closures during the pandemic (<https://carducc.wordpress.com/2020/11/09/covid-19-and-church-closures/>). Some of the statistics are sobering. They are also important as we look to the future.

I know that you rely on several sources of information to make decisions about ministry in the presence of COVID. Here is a new one from Georgia Tech University (<https://covid19risk.biosci.gatech.edu/>) that provides the % probability that at least one Covid-positive person will be at an event. This tool is useful as you consider your own risk factors and what you take into consideration when deciding whether to attend or hold an event. The tool only shows the likelihood of a Covid-positive person being present. It says nothing about your chances for becoming infected. Use the information along with other factors (location of event, size of room, spacing of people, air flow, etc.) to assist with making decisions. More and more the numbers include our own clergy and church members. Please continue to lift in prayer those touched by this disease.

This is a stressful time for all of us. As with Easter, Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas are not going to be the same as they have been in years past. It is a sad and confusing time and our hearts break as we think about those who will not be gathered at our tables, in our sanctuaries, or at our celebrations. Be kind to yourself. Be kind to your pastors, your church members, and your neighbors. There still are countless reasons to offer thanks. God comes into our lives, and the world, every moment of every day.

Be at peace my friends and live in hope and rest assured that God is blessing you even now

- Rev. William P. Worley, PSE Conference Minister



Advent Devotions on the PSEC Facebook Page

As we begin the season of advent, we'd like to let you know that on every day of advent, one of our pastors or lay leaders will be posting an advent devotional on the PSEC Facebook page. Today's posting is available now for you to begin. During these stressful times, take a moment each day and reflect on the wonders of this season of anticipation of the coming of our Lord, the season of love.



Devotions can be found at: <https://www.facebook.com/PSEC.UCC>