



January 17, 2021

## Keeping the Faith: Continuing Connections

### MA-AUCE 2021 Event

February 5-6, 2021 via zoom

This has been a truly strange year and continues to be so. We were forced to cancel our gathering in 2020, and missed the valued time of being together and sharing successes and challenges. Providing Christian Education has never been more mystifying whether you are a pastor, youth minister, children's program coordinator, or lay leader. We need each other and the sooner the better. So our 2021 retreat is going virtual – like everything else. We've changed the dates from a mid-week event to a Friday-Saturday event hoping to make it accessible for more of our churches' part-time leaders. Workshops will include an opening presentation, small group reaction/sharing, and large group report outs. All of our conversations will include ideas for virtual, in-person, and hybrid situations.

For more information and registration go to <https://bit.ly/3pI9KG1>.

If there are any questions, please contact Betsy Majewski at [bmajewski10@aol.com](mailto:bmajewski10@aol.com)



## It's safe to go home again ...

A Northampton County, Pa., family with an expectant mother and other medical issues rely on the bridge over the creek in front of their house to connect them with their community. This includes being able to get to doctor appointments or to receive emergency vehicles.



But in August 2020, Tropical Storm Isaias churned their quiet creek into rushing, swollen floodwaters. Their bridge was rendered structurally unsound and undrivable, cutting off the family's life-line to their community.

"The only access in and out was on foot, and that with some difficulty," said Karl Jones, Disaster Coordinator for the United Church of Christ's Penn Northeast and Pennsylvania Southeast Conferences. "It involved carefully traversing the part of the damaged bridge that remained - then negotiating the last few yards between bridge and bank on a plank." The UCC's Penn Northeast Conference, in cooperation with the Unmet Needs Committee of the Northeast PA VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster), applied for a \$5,000 UCC Long-Term Recovery Grant, with rebuilding the bridge the top priority for the funds. Thanks to the UCC funds together with contributions from the family and Team Orwigsburg, an experienced volunteer bridge-building team from Schuylkill County, Pa. in the UCC's Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, the 44-foot bridge was completed just before Christmas.

One team member, Susan McCartney, a member of St. John's UCC in Orwigsburg, shared her joy: "The teamwork we continue to enjoy within our own ranks, and the expansion of some new faces involved for this project have been very heartwarming. We surely DO need to carry this joy and teamwork into a new year. The wacky year of 2020 brought out the best in our Team and that is truly a gift."

