

Interim Associate Conference Minister for Search and Call 2021 Annual Report
Pennsylvania Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ
Rev. Dr. Susan A. Minasian

Let me begin with a word of gratitude. It has been such a gift for me to serve you in this Interim position. I have learned so much about you, about myself and about the church at large. I have had the opportunity in spite of a Global Pandemic and National Pandemics to live out this ministry with you and for that I am not only a privileged human being but a grateful clergy person.

Search & Call has not stopped. I had a goal of getting the Conference list of Ministry Opportunities to ZERO! However the Holy Spirit has other plans and that list changes and that is something I have come to see as a good thing. That means the church is not stagnant. We have had fluctuations of pastors arriving and moving on to other congregations. We have had pastors retire and new people entering authorized ministry. All of those statistics are in the report provided by the Conference Registrar, Brea Rarick. I hope you will make time to read her report. I have really enjoyed the Congregations that have been open to hearing new things and considering new ways of doing ministry. I have appreciated those moments when my partnership with them has led to some exciting futures that evolved out of trusting God and the work of the Holy Spirit.

In his book, The Universal Christ, Fr. Richard Rohr calls upon the church to be *RELATIONAL* and not *TRANSACTIONAL*. You can ask any Consistory, Transition/Search Team, Congregation or Committee On Ministry and they have heard me repeat that since I have been serving among you. Yes, there are things that must get done. Covenantal process happens in a faithful way when we are attentive to accountability. Jesus and his Disciples were not only in covenant with each other, they were accountable with each other. We are called to do the same.

I have appreciated the efforts of Committees On Ministry to invest time and energy into their ministry. Those tables are where the authorization and standing of our denomination reside. They do important work. Their work is imperative for the faithfulness of how we do what we do together.

Communities of Practice have continued to gather. In the midst of some leadership transition of facilitators, there were Clergy who accepted the call to serve and; they have done so with much grace. If you are not in a Community of Practice, I want to encourage you to do so. Feel free to connect with me if you have any questions about this.

Connecting with Members In Discernment, leading Boundary Trainings, facilitating gatherings around topics of importance around concerns that arise in our world have been a joy for me to offer. Listening to pastors who gather Monday Mornings for the weekly Conference Zoom has been enlightening. Those Mondays when I have facilitated the conversation, I have come away with continued appreciation for what our clergy do every day. Opportunities to preach and teach and be a presence of pastoral care continue to be a part of my vocational journey, even in this position. The Computer Side Chats have given me the opportunity to gather people for more focused conversations about Search & Call and I have been grateful for those who have invested time during those sessions.

When interviewed for this position, I asked the Conference Consistory if they wanted me to be a 'place holder' or did they want me to do what Interims do? They said, "Do what Interims do". And so I have. I have been observing, reflecting and suggesting ways some of our systems and ways of organizing and doing the ministry of the Conference in my particular area so that we can be even better. All of those recommendations are with the Conference Consistory. They will use their judgement as to how those recommendations if any will be implemented in the future.

You are now in the process of searching for a settled Associate Conference Minister. Search and Call is a Spiritual Practice for Congregations and it is no less a Spiritual Practice for the Conference. Please pray for the Search Committee as they represent you in seeking the one God is calling to be with you and serve among you.