

Moderator Report

I am amazed at the resiliency of you, the members and churches, staff and leadership at all levels of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference during this unusual year of the pandemic. Covid 19 has impacted with challenges not seen in over one hundred years. Shutdowns, social distancing, contact tracing, mask wearing, even handwashing have not deterred you from doing the work of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with the world!

Yes, there have been rough roads traveled, and undoubtedly more to come, but as a people of faith, we have traversed the paths set before us with determination and courage. The adaptabilities of sharing worship online through streaming, countless meetings and conversations through platforms such as Zoom, creative means of sharing in Bible study, theological reflection, and mission outreach are astounding. In spite of the upheaval caused by Covid 19, the church from the leadership and staff of the Conference through the leadership and pastors of the local congregations has continued to evangelize, to share the wonderful news of the love of God in Christ Jesus!

And yes, the church began new missions in this pandemic year! Born in the fall of 2019, three special outreaches of the church are bearing fruit in the life of the Conference. The emphases on the problems of addiction, the environment and climate concerns, and issues of systemic racism have given rise to programs addressing these crucial matters within the boundaries of the Conference. We have been blessed to have our eyes opened and ears unstopped by the sharing of these ministries in the life of the Conference. Not only that, but these task forces have shown what is possible for ministry in a new way.

The Consistory has embarked on developing a strategic plan of ministry for the future. As of this writing, we are waiting the responses of the Associations and local churches for input to help shape the direction for the work of the Conference. This step will lead to discerning the shape of the strategic plan to include strengthening our covenantal connections with one another, guiding the evangelizing of the good news in creative ways, and building up our common community one with another. How we accomplish these tasks are unknown at this time, but all the more exciting, as we strive to seek God's will for this Conference.

Concurrent with this endeavor, the Consistory is in the midst of a search for the next Associate Conference Minister for Search and Call. We have been blessed by the ministry of the Rev. Dr. Susan Minasian as our Interim Associate Conference Minister. She has provided, in addition to her duties of the position, deep insights of this ministry for the benefit of the Conference. We are indebted to her wisdom and council in these matters as we explore the whole ministry of Search and Call, in order to help provide the much-needed assistance to the congregations of our Conference.

However, we are respectful of the interim process and it is time to honor that commitment. The Conference Consistory has completed a Conference Profile, advertised the position of the Associate Conference Minister for Search and Call and, as of this writing, is organizing a Search

Committee, guided by the Holy Spirit, to conduct a search for the person who will be called to minister among us. We are hopeful to welcome the completion of this process with a joyful gathering, possibly in the fall of this year, to call the person God desires to join with us. This is indeed an exciting time!

I wish to thank the wonderful and competent staff for the tremendous work amidst the need for adaptability of this past year. Our plan to move slowly towards a mobile office platform was hastened by the Covid 19 pandemic. Our staff not only was forced into a compressed timeline for this change, but has been very efficient even while adapting to this new way of working. Thank you to Rev. William Worley, Rev. Cean James, Rev. Susan Minasian, Ms. Susan Creswell, Ms. Brea Rarick, Ms. Tammie Wisniewski and Ms. Kim Kulesa for your wonderful and dedicated ministry to the life of the churches of the Conference.

Also, I wish to thank all the pastors and members of the congregations of the Conference for your resilient and amazing work of doing ministry in this trying time. Your witness brings much hope for the future of the Church, as we continue to strive to faithfully share in all ways the love of God known in Jesus Christ with the world! I am honored to be the Moderator the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, knowing of your continued evangelizing of the gospel in your worship and mission to the world! There is indeed much to rejoice!

Respectfully,

Rev. Antonio L. Villareal