



December 26, 2021

### **...“all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”**

*Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Luke 3:8*

For the last many months, I have counseled with men of the relapse addiction unit at the Caron Foundation. It is more continuing education than I could have asked for. But the lessons have been invaluable mostly for the ways I have been witness to people struggling to make deep, fundamental changes to their lives; to repent, to turn around in the words of John the Baptist. And not just once. I am in awe of those I meet who have failed to stay clean or sober but who come back again and again to the seemingly impossible work of being the person they want to be and the hope of freedom by which they wish so desperately to live.

At some point, all the men I meet have reached the outer limits of their own capacity to live differently and have come to call on a power greater than themselves. Father Richard Rohr once defined addiction simply as our refusal to ask for help. If that is true, and I believe it is, then we are all addicted — not just to coffee or consumerism or cell phones but to a self-reliance that keeps us locked in isolation and loneliness — two seeds of addiction. The gift of the pandemic (or of addiction), if we can call it that, has been to pull back the vail of carefully constructed lives (and systems) that aren’t life giving and, in some cases, life taking. Its not a gift easily received or appreciated.

Enter John the Baptist who in his own way attempted to pull back the vail of carefully constructed lives (*We have Abraham for our ancestor!*) that weren’t necessarily life giving. His prescription was to let go of things, to honor limitations and invite God into that space— three seeds

of sobriety. Left to ourselves, this is hard medicine to swallow. The men at Caron, who reside there for up to a month, draw strength, courage and grace from each other in supportive community. They often lament having to come to treatment and eventually, having connected in life giving ways with others, fear having to leave those connections behind.

My deepest hope for the church has always been that we can receive and appreciate John’s message that pulls back the vail of carefully constructed lives that aren’t necessarily life giving. That we can help each other take his prescription to let go of things, honor limitations and invite God into that space. That we can draw strength, courage and grace from each other. Connect meaningfully and never have to fear leaving those connections behind. I am convinced that in so doing, “*all flesh shall see the salvation of God.*”

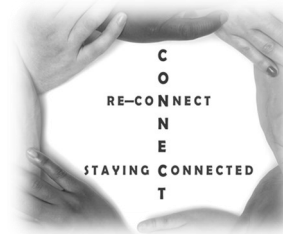
May it be so for you and me and the people we love.

Pastor Bill

*Rev. William Worley, PSE Conference Minister*



### **Re-SCHEDULED !!!**



**Connect,  
Reconnect,  
Staying Connected**  
w/ Rev. Cean James

### **Building and Maintaining Fellowship during the prolonged Covid Pandemic**

**TWO workshop options available.**

**Choose the one you are comfortable with!**

**January 22nd—VIA ZOOM**

Register at: <https://psecconnect0122.eventbrite.com>

**January 29th—IN PERSON @ First UCC, Schuylkill Haven**

Register at: <https://psecconnect0129.eventbrite.com>