

**Report to Pennsylvania Southeast Conference Annual Meeting  
Covering February 1 – April 15, 2022  
Rev. Kevin J. McLemore, *Associate Conference Minister for Search & Call***

**Narrative Report:**

I began as the settled ACM for Search and Call on the first of February and was blessed to have the Rev. Dr. Susan Minasian and Registrar and Assistant for Search and Call Brea Rarick guide me through the tools and tasks needed for this work. The choice to have some overlap between myself and Susan was especially helpful, as she shared with me various challenges and blessings unique to this position. Brea continues to tutor me in other ways, formally and informally, and I'm thankful for her help and patience with me. No doubt that there is more to learn, and the training will continue, but I embrace a challenge and am feeling more and more competent every day.

In addition to the excellent training provided by Brea and Susan, I'm having conversations via ZOOM with other ACMs tasked with Search and Call to explore "best practices" in their settings. Any information or thoughts on strengthening our ability to provide pastors to congregation and congregations for pastors is welcome. Our challenges in PSEC around finding pastors for both interim and called positions are growing, as was expected.

On a personal note, I joined St. Peter's - Pikeland (the Rev. Doug Hanson is my pastor) in Chester Springs on March 13 and have transferred my standing to the Ursinus Association. I'm located in Downingtown and am enjoying my home office, with my two dogs. My spouse will join me in PA in the summer of 2023, after he retires from teaching in an elementary school.

I also want to thank the staff their support during this transition. As someone who has served in other conferences as a minister, I am incredibly thankful for the strength of the staff, and the good comradery. In addition to Rev. Bill Worley and others welcoming me warmly into the conference, the churches and clergy have done the same. It is good to be here, and I am glad that God has called to this place to do this work among you. Thank you for calling to serve the PSEC.

Now, to the work:

**Overview on Search and Call:**

Since the beginning of the year, an additional 11 churches have or will experience the departure of their settled pastors by the end of June, moving the list of churches in some sort of transition up to a total of 53. This list of 53 churches includes many with long-term needs for settled pastors or those have stopped their search for a settled pastor for various reasons. This portends the immediate need for more interim pastors to fill these positions. There are 9 active searches posted on PSEC Ministerial Opportunities Page, with an additional 6 churches who placed their searches on-hold, again, for various reasons. Sadly, 2 churches (St. Luke's – North Wales and St. Luke's – Philadelphia) not included in the 53 closed in April and May. We are grateful for their faithful ministry and to God for their time in service to the Gospel. Three

churches are likely to install new settled pastors in that same time period, thus ending their season of transition (though, of course, all life is always in some state of transition, and so is the Church and churches).

This is not “breaking news,” but we are now fully in the middle of the challenge we and other conferences anticipated some years ago, as a large bulk of our ministers move into retirement. In addition, others have begun to transition to other settings “post” COVID to other churches. The current challenge is to simply provide candidates for the churches searching for ministers, and this will be my primary focus. Twenty-eight ministers began to newly circulate their profile in PSEC since February 1, though most of them have not asked their profiles to be sent to a particular church. My hope is to focus more on the ministerial profiles that have indicated some level of interest in serving in our Conference and invite potential candidates into possible settings. We recently began reaching out via email to those who circulating profiles in our conference to point out new interim positions, which brought a small influx of new candidates in several settings. Our desire it to reach out every 3-4 weeks via email to these ministers with older and newer possibilities to serve congregations in our setting. This strategy is nothing new, but I’m committed to do more of it, as we also search for ministers in our own Conference. In addition, we are looking at possible social media strategies to spark interest in our churches and conference. Brea, Bill and I have been discussing various ways to fill these upcoming positions, especially the interim ones. The “Great Resignation/Retirement” is upon us, and my hope is to find new ways of re-imagining the Search and Call process.

#### **Committees on Ministry:**

At this point, I will be resourcing all 5 COM’s, though Bill will continue to meet with the Formation side of the Covenant COM. I have met with all 5 COMs multiple times and hopefully provided some support from the Conference. I’ve also met with COM Chairs outside of meetings an additional 6 times. I’ve also contacted MESA on two separate occasions to discuss issues arising in two cases. I’ve met Matt Hoover to discuss the JMAT model and have experienced four separate JMAT interviews with the Committees.

#### **Communities of Practice:**

I’m still learning about our PSEC COP program, though I have been personally active in one for five years.

#### **Other Meetings and Connections:**

I’ve attended three worship services outside of my home church and have preached almost every week since I arrived in Pennsylvania. My schedule for preaching or attendance on Sundays at different churches is full through early July, except for one weekend in May. However, I welcome any chance to connect with the churches of the PSEC.

Thank you for electing me as your PSEC ACM for Search and Call. It is good to be among you!

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Kevin J. McLemore