



## PSEC Addiction & Recovery Taskforce Report for 2023 PSEC Annual Spring Meeting

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*The mission of the PSEC Addiction & Recovery Taskforce is to share God's love with people suffering from the destructive disease of addiction and their affected family members and friends. Our goal is to decrease stigma surrounding addiction by broadening individual knowledge, awareness, and understanding while providing support, resources, and other vital information about this disease to ministers and congregations.*

- **Addiction and Recovery Book Study:** For thirteen weeks in 2023, two members of the Addiction and Recovery task force lead a book study group that not only read about, but actually worked through the twelve-step program of Alcoholics Anonymous. We used "Breathing Underwater – Spirituality and the Twelve Steps" by Richard Rohr as our guide. Not all of our members were struggling or had struggled with culturally named addictions. A number of us faced into the cultural addictions common in our society. We shared our struggles, received support, and were changed by God's grace. We strongly recommend this book for anyone sincerely interested in letting go of what blocks us from truly and fully living our lives.
- We continue to expand our community knowledge by meeting with resource personnel in various areas. Kay Bristler from Courage Medicine gave us great insight as to the need for services, specifically in the Kensington area of Philadelphia. Her group offers recovery/harm reduction services, mental health support, wound care and more. We look forward to furthering our understanding of where God is calling us.
- **NEW! Prisoner Pen Pal Program:** The Task Force is working with Reverend Russ Gates, former Chaplain at Phoenix Maximum Security State Prison (Graterford), to introduce an email "Pen Pal" program that would give caring individuals a safe and effective way to communicate with an inmate electronically (no email or personal information shared). The purpose is to simply relate person to person and give that stranger some hope of knowing that others care about their wellbeing.
  - Hybrid Event Scheduled: 'Training for Pen Pals' will be held on June 25<sup>th</sup> in-person at New Goshenhoppen UCC East Greenville, and simultaneously on Zoom. Please see the PSEC Calendar online for details and registration.
- Can we speak to your church or small group? Speaking events are available! Please consider having us at your church or virtually as needed – We are here for you!
  - Sessions allow attendees to hear personal experiences and learn about the spiritual, psychological, and physical aspects of the disease, as well as recovery. Question and answer periods are provided.
  - Recent Event Held: Reverend Dr. Deborah Rahn Clemens spoke at Birdsboro UCC May 21<sup>st</sup>
- **Web Page:** The Task Force webpage is loaded with useful information for Clergy, Family, Congregations, Addicts, and other caring individuals. This includes personal stories, 12 Step breakdowns, theological and personal essays, helpful videos, Narcan information and other links and resources. Member contact information is also available.  
Website: <https://psec.org/missions-ministries/justice-witness/addiction-and-recovery-task-force/>
- The PSEC eNews contains a weekly offering from the Task Force, which will continue throughout the year.
- **COME JOIN US!** You don't need to be an addict or know an addict to help God's children feel His love. We meet monthly via Zoom and would welcome visitors at any time to learn about this vital mission. If God has put this on your heart, please contact Cheryl A. Rathbun, Task Force Secretary, to receive the next Zoom invitation. Email: [psec.ar.taskforce@gmail.com](mailto:psec.ar.taskforce@gmail.com)

Respectfully submitted by Rev. Dr. Deborah Rahn Clemens, Chair of the PSEC Addiction & Recovery Task Force.  
Any questions may be directed to any of the Task Force members.