

Dear Iva and Consistory Members,

[I ask Iva to forward my email to you, since it is the primary way I have communicated with the people I work with throughout the community.]


I begin my report with a question: What would we do without Zoom, Conference Calls, and E-mails? It seems Church, Community, and UCC Penn Central Conference rely on these technological formats to remain in contact with congregations, agencies, and employees working in home offices sequestered - protecting themselves and others from Covid-19.

I chose email to prepare my Consistory report because I used it to correspond with the community agencies I've worked with since I began my volunteer community chaplaincy ministry as an ordained UCC pastor in April 2014. Yes, occasionally, I did use my "cell phone" and not my "land phone." (We still have one at home.). But, I have to say no one called me. Instead, they (representatives of the community agencies and numerous boards I serve) sent emails arranging Zoom and Conference Calls. And, this is how I communicated monthly with the Boards I serve including: American Mental Health Awareness, Carlisle Area Religious Council, Cumberland and Perry Drug and Alcohol Commission SAPC Team, Kiwanis, and Maranantha.

NAMI was an exception as Board members communicated through email and we were able on a couple of occasions to meet "in person by practicing "social distancing. And, I wrote a NAMI Faith Grant proposal and shared with members through email. A whole lot of work was accomplished by the use of technology. But, not being able to meet in person limited our communication and camaraderie.

Another exception was the Kiwanis Club of Carlisle's annual Blueberry Fundraiser that raises funds for our "Warm the Children" Program.

Although the promotions and sales were through electronic media, telephone, and local radio broadcasts, the distribution of the blueberries was through drive-through pick up at Project Share staffed by Kiwanis members. It was a pleasure to actually see my colleagues and to personally carry out the blueberries to those who came through in their cars for pickup. How wonderful to see our local blueberry supporters hearing their gratitude and praise for our wonderful blueberries.

Kiwanis for the past several months meets weekly at LeTort Park's Large Pavilion. We are able to share conversations and conduct our business meetings over our "brown bag  luncheons we each bring from home.

This past week we spent over two hours labeling books for K-2 children for our “Learn to Read, Read to Learn Program.” As incoming Kiwanis President this Fall, I want to implement another reading program for Young Adult Readers. I have been researching to write a proposal for this project. And, I am exploring avenues to increase membership in the grandparents program — G.R.A.N.D.S.—a support group for grandparents raising grandchildren due to the opioid crisis that Karen Byers and I started over a year ago. The program is sponsored by the YWCA Carlisle and Sadler Health Clinic. We had planned a G.R.A.N.D.S. walk from the Cumberland County Courthouse to the LeTort Park Small Pavilion. Unfortunately, we decided to cancel it because of Covid-19 and reschedule to next Fall 2021.

The opportunity for park luncheons, as “planning meetings” also occurred at Biddle Mission Park to plan a “prayer meeting” at the labyrinth yet to be scheduled.

As part of Church and Community Connections Council, I am coordinating a breakfast program for New Life Community Church on September 13th.

I attend the Mental Health and Drug Treatment Courts. The participants can talk with me, if they need someone to talk with about a concern. I continue to mentor my Cumberland County Reentry Program woman who is doing well in the community. And, I have been asked to help develop a reentry program for another group.

There is more I can share about my chaplain advocacy program. And, I always look for ways to talk with others in the community including my local business owners who share stories with me about community needs.

Covid-19 has indeed changed the communication technology we use to continue our work. However, it is through Hope, Faith, and Prayer that we are strengthened and sustained by The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. AMEN.

TO THE GLORY OF GOD WE SERVE.

Respectfully Submitted.

Chaplain Donna