

Chaplain Donna's Report
Sunday, December 15, 2019—January 15, 2020

Psalm 90:12 (NRSV) "Teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart."

One of the events, I always enjoy attending during Advent, is the Rose Exchange at St. Patrick's Church in Carlisle. In this Most Holy Season, I appreciate the opportunity this ecumenical practice provides Christian congregations to attend worship services at another's church.

As most Consistory members know, I became a member of Kiwanis when I first began my ministry as an ordained UCC minister with a call to serving the community. Now, in my fifth year as a Kiwanis member, I am President-Elect. I am involved in many activities and functions required for members and officers. In 2020, Kiwanis is celebrating its 100th year as a Club in Carlisle by organizing and being part of the larger Carlisle community to restore the children's "Fort" in Letort Park. This past year, much discussion took place in both our Kiwanis luncheon and business meetings to make action plans focused on how to accomplish this restoration mission. Recently, some members of Kiwanis attended a Carlisle Borough Council meeting to receive approval to begin the restoration process. And, for Kiwanis, our "Warm the Children" and assistance for the Salvation Army's "Ring the Bell at Wal-Mart found Kiwanis Members

joining members of other community organizations to help raise funds for Salvation Army services.

As a Board Member of the Carlisle Area Religious Council, we “packed cookies” for the Cumberland County Prisoners and staff to have homemade cookies baked and donated by local Carlisle churches. We worked alongside other volunteers at Project Share who opened their space for us to pack the cookies. The Prison Chaplain joined us and when, at the end of the evening, when all the cookies were packaged, he took them back to the prison.

It was also a time when the 1st Church’s staff celebrated Christmas at a Luncheon at the Rustic Tavern. Much gratitude to our Consistory and Congregation for a joyous and thankful celebration.

I continue my affiliate work weekly with the Cumberland County Drug Treatment Court and the Cumberland County Reentry Program. My co-facilitator (KB) and I are committed to working with the G.R.A.N.D.S. program’s mission to provide support for families raising children because of the opioid epidemic. As a Trauma Informed Care Trainer, I am active in mental health training programs meeting with my co-facilitators to both plan and provide training to social service and other community agencies who make requests. Recently, I was invited to serve as a NAMI Board Member; my first meeting is tomorrow evening.

I am a UCC Penn Central Conference Chaplain and speak with clergy who are referred to me by the Conference Chaplain. I recently attended our chaplain group at Conference office. I was invited to be a chaplain presence at our Penn Central Conference Mid-Winter Clergy Sabbath next week. I look forward to serving as a chaplain to provide spiritual care information for self-care for ministers.

In the Carlisle Community, I am invited to serve with other community leaders to work on projects focused on providing care for early childhood education programs. I spend time with law, medical school, university, and college faculty researching and discussing how we work together on community projects.

During this report's time period, I prepared and presented at a Mercersburg Association's meeting (last week) on the role of the church in addressing the opioid epidemic. At UCC's Synod meeting in Milwaukee (2019), a resolution was passed by Synod recognizing the opioid crisis as a public health epidemic. I continue my connection with Hershey Medical Center where I completed my Chaplain Residency. I am invited to both attend the Medical Schools trainings; and, to present to the groups on my community programs. I am motivated to do my community ministry by attending seminars and conferences

where I can learn and share about prevention and treatment of individuals addicted to opioids (and alcohol).

As a member of the American Mental Awareness Association, I participate in Board Meetings and served as a moderate of a panel at our 2nd Conference in Harrisburg.

I serve as a liaison between First Church's Church and Community Connections Council and the Carlisle Community. At present, I am exploring ways our church (any and all churches) can be involved/included in serving breakfast to the hungry in the Carlisle Community at a local church involved in working with the neighborhood residents where the church is located. What I learned by attending the church's breakfast program was it is just not churches who participate in the program (like the Salvation Army model for lunch 1st Church and others participate in four times a year.) I was both surprised and impressed with the number of individuals who were at the breakfast I observed who invited their friends to assist them by bringing a breakfast dish, fruit, etc. AND, THE NEAT PART, was the friends brought their middle and high school children to serve. The parents believed this is one way their children can learn that not everyone has the same opportunities in life. These community members want their children to learn the importance of helping those who do not have as much as they do. And,

a couple of weeks ago, I received an e-mail invitation from a community person who was there inviting me to participate in the breakfast program she was organizing for the community church. So, unintentionally, I learned there IS another model to the CHURCH model where congregants prepare and bring the meal. It can also be accomplished by COMMUNITY folks organizing the breakfasts. And, I am blessed to serve in a community where I learned how community folks can put their heads, hands, and hearts together to bring a warm and nutritious breakfast to those who may not have a home with a kitchen to prepare breakfast and enjoy fellowship by eating it with others.

As a community chaplain, I often think of how Jesus did his ministry in the community. He was not in a central “church” location. He didn’t “call” his disciples all at the same time and give them a training handbook to do ministry. He called them one by one, or sometimes He called two disciples. He was in the community; not in a synagogue.

And, so I have learned this past month that being a chaplain in the community IS like Jesus’s ministry. Just as he called individuals-- one person, maybe, two. Maybe that is the model for community chaplaincy? I did find, and will continue to find others, who will join me because I now realize I have more than one or two folks because I have the community agencies where I am

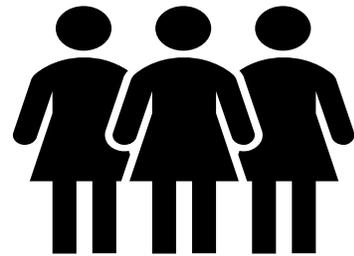
welcomed. I continue to keep faith, have hope, trust, and keep on going: one day at a time. I love the “Thought for the Day” in our “Upper Room” magazine (January – February 2020): “God’s hand has led me, is leading me, and will lead me tomorrow.”

As 1st Church members know, they can always call me with any questions. I love to share stories—to talk about--how ALL people can BE Good Samaritans and practice the “Be-attitudes.” Thanks be to God there are still Good Samaritans both in church and our community.

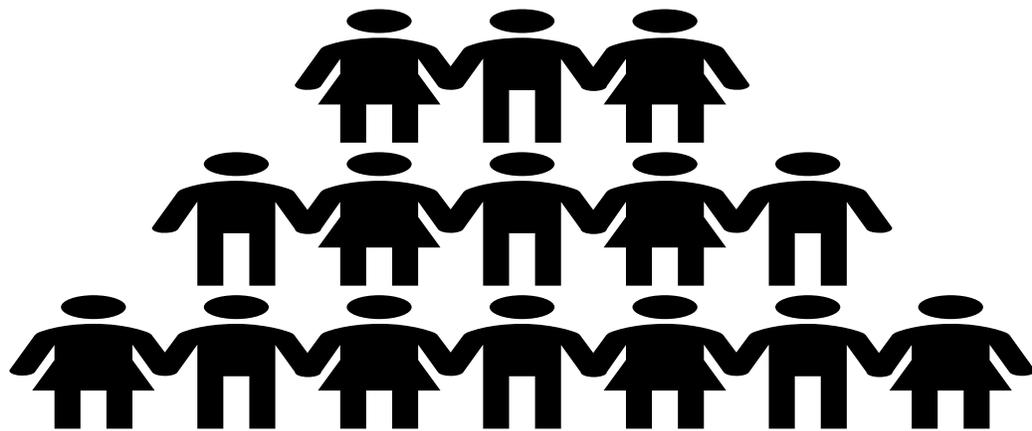
HAPPY NEW YEARS 2020!

CHAPLAIN DONNA

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Chaplain Donna – January 15, 2020



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