

Monthly Report – Chaplain Advocate

**The Rev. Dr. Donna C. Hale
First United Church of Christ
April 19-May 12, 2021**

**“Show me your way, Lord, teach me your paths.”
Psalm 25:4 (NIV)**

As an ordained minister with a “Call” to Community Chaplaincy, my path changed because of Covid-19. **I am not alone.** All the agencies and local boards where I serve as a member have all adjusted their traditional schedules and work patterns to maintain the vision and mission of their agencies, businesses, social clubs, schools, hospitals, etc. In fact, everyone’s daily lives have been impacted. All of us are praying to God: **“Show me your way, Lord, teach me your paths.”** (Psalm 25:4 (NIV))

During this past year of Covid-19 my work schedule changed. No longer an affiliate working with agencies in their workplaces; I still had responsibilities—but remotely. My path changed, by the way I work with the agencies and boards. Just like the staff in agencies and businesses, I **now** work through ZOOM. **And**, the I-phone, **And** the computer—**And**, from home. **Alone.**

ZOOM and my I-phone and computer make it ALL possible for me to work with Kiwanis – Carlisle where I serve as President and have responsibilities for coordinating and scheduling bi-weekly ZOOM meetings and monthly Kiwanis Board meetings. I serve on Carlisle Area Religious Council (CARC) and assist with projects. Long standing work with the Cumberland and Perry Drug and Alcohol Commission, and with Maranatha – Carlisle where I am a member of their Executive Boards’ programming community projects that require meetings – through ZOOM, I-phone, computers--all technology. My path, since Covid-19, involves much of my time on the telephone coordinating speakers and maintaining contacts with agencies regarding what schedules will be like once we are able to meet again in-person. I cannot recall any face-to-face meetings during Covid-19. I do have contacts with businesses I visit in Downtown Carlisle—all requiring masks and social distancing.

Because of technology—especially ZOOM, I can meet with NAMI (I am now on the Board), and with the American Mental Health Awareness Board. And, during COVID-19 isolation, I signed-up for ZOOM seminars on mental health and substance abuse issues. I now get invitations to join other groups that are providing services in the community. I see a movement from agencies working as silos to becoming partners with others. As Bob Dylan sang: “The times they are a-changing.” I add to Dylan’s line: “...the paths are changing too.”

Recently, I received a telephone call from a grandmother raising her grandson because of parental opioid use. She learned about G.R.A.N.D.S. (a support group I co-facilitate) sponsored by the YWCA Carlisle and Sadler Health Center. This grandmother learned about our support group through PA KINCONNECTOR. Several days later, during one of my “business walks.” I was joined by a woman I know from another local family support group dealing with opioid use. So, former **paths** are reconnecting. I receive phone calls from agencies because they have a client who would like to participate in a NAMI meeting. At Kiwanis, our Club is busy preparing for our annual Blue Berry Sales Program that provides warm clothing for children (“Warm the Children”).

Each day, I thank God for the paths opening for me to continue my ministry as an advocate for the community. I recently read that chaplaincy programs are important in the community and need to be there. Through this pandemic, God continues to guide my path oftentimes in ways I do not know—but I keep moving. God **IS** showing me His ways and teaching me his paths.

Glory be to God, WE serve.

Chaplain Donna
May 7, 2021