

## Christian Caregiver: A Holy Conversation, May 23, 2017

On May 23, 2017 at the Presbytery meeting, I invite you to join me as I facilitate a community conversation as we listen to each other, share our experiences from our family caregiving journey. The conversation that will strengthen and heal you is the dialogue between you and God. Start that dialogue now. Bring your journal, Bible and an open heart. I look forward to meeting you and with your permission, write a group prayer from our conversation together to share with each other.

I look forward to the Presbytery meeting at FPC of Goshen and the opportunity to facilitate a community conversation for family caregivers. I know I will be with a community of believers who have been journeying through Lent and Easter with me. I am not a lone caregiver who could solve or change the lives of my aging parents or even myself. In Christ, no caregiver is ever alone. All the emotions, actions, hopes, purpose, perseverance, forgiveness, grace, power, love, trust, the dying and rising of the caregiving journey is an experience of Christ in our world, our homes, our families, our body, mind and spirit. Every Sunday, during prayers and concerns, I am reminded of what church is. The community of believers that worships, prays, gives and receives, shares, learns, laughs and cries together, comforts, listens, lifts up, helps, bears witness to every caregiver and care-receiver because of Jesus Christ. Christ was born needing care into a family. He gave and rested from deeds and travels. He delegated and inspired others to serve and love others as He did. He struggled through temptation, doubt, fear, abandonment, human powerlessness and looked to Abba God. He asked for and accepted help in his need and suffering. His body and mission were entrusted to others to be cared for and carried on. As the risen Lord, who lived and experienced a fully human life and death, He came back to communicate with us, to answer our lingering doubts and fears. He promised to be with us to the end. I have no answers for a grieving widow or parent or the brutally beautiful caregiving God blesses us with, except to look to our Savior and to seek the community that bears his name. When I sang "It was for Love" with the choir on Maundy Thursday, tears could not be held back. Love's goodbye is always HOPE; not death but HOPE for the whole community. The one that believes in me shall never die is a message for the community of faith. Each one person alone shall perish, but a whole community, grafted onto Christ, lives!

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Please contact me if interested in attending Christian Caregiver Circle, a validated ministry in Ossining to support family caregivers. We meet on two Saturday afternoon meetings, six weeks apart. Contact me to register for June and July meetings.