

February 23, 2017

Greetings!

For the past few years, the Penn Northeast Conference (PNEC) and Pennsylvania Southeast Conference (PSEC) have been engaging one another in ministry and sharing our programs. Our leadership teams have encouraged dialogue with one another. We have a joint Clergy Convocation and invite one another to Ministry Day. Our Conferences have been working together to identify opportunities for us to be working together to build relationships and encourage one another in our work for the gospel.

In February 2016, we began to have some more intentional and focused conversations. Alan Miller and Bill Worley (PSEC Conference Minister) invited the PNEC Board of Directors and PSEC Consistory along with ministry committee chair people and committee members. We had conversation and asked questions, such as: How can we build relationships? Can we share resources? How can we continue to build relationships between the churches of our Conferences? Is God calling us to a new vision of Conference ministry? We shared our hopes as well as our fears.

From that dinner, a Visioning Team was formed including people from both PNEC and PSEC. We began to dream and discuss possibilities to be in ministry together. From these conversations, the team invited the PNEC Board and the PSEC Consistory to a leadership retreat to continue imagining new possibilities.

The Board and Consistory went on retreat at the end of September 2016. We had fellowship time, team building exercises, discernment activities with asset mapping, leadership/communication development, and shared our stories with one another. From this retreat, a Transition Team was formed with 4 people from PSEC and 4 people from PNEC. The team members for PNEC are: Al Bastin, Barbara Hanks, Helena Lindquist, and myself. The team was formed in the fall, and our first meeting occurred at the end of January.

The Transition Team is tasked with continuing the conversations to discover how our two conferences can continue to work together into the future. One possible option for exploration is the possibility of forming one conference. Right now, our focus is to continue the conversation to explore those possibilities. Our team is asking questions around the identity, mission, and purpose of Conference ministry, and asking how we can be in ministry together.

The Transition Team has written a draft resolution to come before the PNEC Board of Directors for approval to bring to the PNEC Annual Meeting. This resolution is requesting the affirmation of this process of continuing conversation. The Transition Team has set out a process for engaging all of you in these talks. If the resolution passes at annual meeting, we will begin holding small group forums to have discussions and receive your input on this process. We would like to begin these small group conversations in the summer/fall of 2017.

If you have questions or input in the process, I would be glad to hear from you. Please feel free to email me, call, or get together over a cup of coffee. I would be glad to hear your perspective on this process and welcome your thoughts.

Peace, Joanne

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