LAY LEADERSHIP SUPPORT GROUP MEETING 3/11/23 (on ZOOM)

Attendees: Donna Fried (New Goshenhoppen UCC), Robin Hightower (Peace in Zion UCC), Pat Konigsbauer, Trish Rathbun, Diana Schoch, Rosemary Derstine (St. Peter's Tohickon UCC), Carl Altenderfer (Immanuel UCC), Dawn Blessing (St. Luke's UCC), Alec Hoffman (Frieden's UCC), Sheri Reed (Glenside UCC)

Topics Discussed:

Ministry Positions

- Several churches in search of both FT and PT pastors
- Size of church membership and ability to support staff positions/ministries – large variation among churches - from high of 900 members to 30 active members
- Grief found in congregations during forced transition process
- Endowments being used to pay expenses where expenditures higher than income
- Need clarification of responsibilities; how to meet congregational needs with PT minister; responsibilities must be picked up by laity
- Opportunities to share minister between 2 churches
- Kevin McLemore from PSEC is good resource to help with creative solutions for congregations in transition
- Members of congregation in some churches preach in minister's absence
- Overall need for more lay involvement

Congregational Visitations

- Pastors do majority in some churches
- One church has active visitation committee – avg 10 hrs/wk
- Many churches send cards – get well and birthday
- Pastor, Elders, consistory members visit & phone calls

Consistory Items

- Wide variation in numbers – from 21 to 4 members
- Several include non-voting members
- Mostly 3 yr. terms; some require being off a year after term limit reached, then being eligible again; some 3 yr. terms with ability to serve only 2 consecutive terms in a row. One church has no term limit.
- Common problem is finding people willing to join Consistory
- Personally approaching individuals to join found to be helpful in recruiting
- Leaving members recruit new members found helpful
- Identifying/recruiting people with special skill sets (accounting, HR, non-profit background e.g.) helps Consistory increase its effectiveness
- Agenda developed differently in churches – some by members of Consistory, some by Pastors only, and some by Pastor and Consistory member collaboration
- Distributing agenda and reports at least a week prior to meeting allows for email communication among Consistory members and the ability to problem solve issues before meeting in-person

- Cuts down on rambling conversation and shortens length of time
- One church moved meetings until later in month to allow for pre-meeting reports review

PSEC Lay Leadership Spring Convocation

- Most members have attended at least once
- Promotes understanding of UCC mission and available benefits & support from PSEC
- Shared fellowship is unrecognized value
- Frequently difficult to interest Consistory members or other members of congregation in attending
- Can be hard to effectively share information with congregation
- Suggested that this group promote attendance to all consistory members and other members of congregation

Future Plans

- Suggestion offered that Sue Creswell make this a recurring meeting on zoom with permanent link address - will follow up
- Suggestion offered that group meet in person once or twice a year for fellowship. Picnic at Lake Nockamixon in summer offered as one option; churches could also take turns hosting. Further discussion to come
- St. Peter's to host Lenten potluck supper with "worshipful play" on March 29 at 6PM. All group members invited
- Suggested topic for future discussion – What is Church now? What should Church be like today?

Meeting ended with closing prayer

Next Meeting – May 13th