

#1 – Leadership Council to meet January 23 - What is normally a three day event, the Leadership Council meeting in retreat at the home of Kathy Holsopple, this coming year we will have our focused annual vision planning meeting via Zoom on the fourth Saturday in January. With signs of hope emerging with new vaccines and therapeutics, we are hoping to return to in-person gatherings more frequently by next summer. As most are learning, virtual meetings offer savings and convenience with less travel. So I expect that we will follow the lead of many others in using a “hybrid” approach for our conference meetings into the future.



In that vein, we will be planning for another virtual delegate gathering – our Spring “Faith and Life Gathering” - on Saturday, March 6, 2021. Delegates can expect a more detailed proposal for disbursing funds for congregational ministry from the proceeds of the sale of the International Guest House property. As of this writing, we and the IGH board are still working to close and settle accounts. We will also be bringing a 2021-22 conference spending and staffing plan to the Spring meeting as usual.

#2 – “Giving Tuesday” and year end giving report - Thank you to everyone for your gifts to Allegheny Conference as we close out the 2020 calendar year. \$690 was received on Giving Tuesday (from fifteen persons) and \$1,575 from our year end fund appeal (from eight persons). With strong continued support from congregations, we project ending the first half of our fiscal year (Jul-Dec) with 45% of budgeted revenue and having spent 40% our expense budget. We look forward to planning with you all as we navigate new territory - a large reserve from the sale of the IGH property, while balancing a yearly operating budget.



#3 – Peer Clusters growing - With the addition of a Chaplain’s Peer Cluster, a total of 23 persons (pastors and chaplains) have joined in an Allegheny peer support group in the last two months. This is allowing more focus for the chaplains and allowing a more manageable sized group for pastor peer support. I continue to be challenged and inspired by the wealth of experience and the rich sharing and support that our ministering persons bring to our endeavor of ministering to one another. And I pray that we are able to live into our vision of being a conference committed to: Jesus at the center, collaboration, and ministry in our respective neighborhoods. May God grant us wisdom and understanding as we grow together.



#4 – Note on current event planning - Given that we are quite uncertain about the timing of being able to hold in-person events, planning is happening behind the scenes to move forward when the restrictions on meetings begin to be removed. For instance, the annual Spring Study/Retreat for pastors and leaders at Laurelville has not been cancelled, and we will explore with potential attendees whether to hold this highly anticipated event at all, virtually, or with hybrid options. Summer camps for children and youth are also moving forward, anticipating that there is a much stronger possibility of holding this kind of (mostly) outside event by summer time. Stay tuned for more information in January/February.

#5 – A word of perseverance and hope - I hesitate to add to the voices either decrying or looking beyond our current circumstances. I have heard too many make too light of the pandemic. I have heard too many “encouragements” to hold on and look past the pandemic. I sometimes believe I have little or nothing to say, that another voice is less needed than to just be quiet. I want to listen more – to those who are in all sorts of agony. I also want to listen to those who see how God is moving. So if there is any encouragement – check out Philippians 2 once again.

