

Pastor Letter 10/25/2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

You likely have already been hearing about upcoming shared ministry opportunities. In a recent article I was reading I was reminded of the need for shared ministry in these divisive times. It is really Presbyterian to be connectional in ministry, which is why we support our denominations through funds, of which much are dispersed for ministries around the globe. The idea of shared ministry is Biblical when the disciple Peter was writing in his first letter, he was addressing exiles in the dispersion. They were like we are today, one church in many locations. Did you know that we have six Presbyterian Churches, fellow sisters and brothers in the Presbyterian church, within 15 miles of one another? The reality also is that all these churches have aging congregations. This, for some, creates fear and a desire to retreat to what we have always done, but for others, see as the first disciples saw an opportunity to be one church connected in many locations.

You may recall a sermon from this past February based on Ecclesiastes that reminds us that two are better than one. In other words, we are better together. The future of church decline may seem hopeless, but it is not, because we have each other as we explore how we can form relationships in our community that can bring Christ to them. In these shared ministry times, we can test out our conversations and get to know others in similar situations to ours. Shared ministry is an opportunity for us, as well as all the churches in this 15-mile radius, to be examples of working together and learning from one another by finding shared values. For us, one is believing Jesus is Lord.

In the coming future, especially this Advent season, there will be many shared ministry opportunities for us to begin to get to know our fellow neighbors, other Presbyterian church congregants. The first one is November 6, an informal lunch to get to know one another. All the local churches have been invited to gather for a pot pie lunch (I hear they are delicious) at First Presbyterian Church in Stroudsburg. The second one is November 19 for an advent wreath making event at Christ Presbyterian Church of the Slate Belt to learn about advent wreathes and make one to take home. In good Presbyterian fashion we are invited to bring along treats to go with the provided coffee, tea and hot chocolate that will be available. Third, you don't have to go to another church for this shared ministry opportunity. This Advent season we will have a joint theme between four churches, "Journeying in Faith and Trust." Each Sunday in Advent, you will have a pastor from one of the four churches lead worship. Each of the pastors will rejoin their home congregation for the final week in Advent. Finally, we will hear more about this in the coming weeks, but on Christmas Day, worship will be joint at First Stroudsburg Presbyterian Church, where we will recreate the nativity using congregants. On New Year's Day, worship will gather at Christ Presbyterian Church for a Lesson in Christmas carols. My family and I plan to attend all shared ministry events. I pray that the Spirit is moving you to join me in these opportunities to share our love with fellow brothers and sisters in Christ and learn how we can work together more to bring Christ to the folks living in this 15-mile radius community. God teaches we are better together.

In His Peace,

Pastor Nicki

YouTube: live stream and recording can be found at <https://www.espresbyterian.com/worship/> or <https://www.youtube.com/user/ESPresbyterian>

Facebook: click on the link below near the time the service begins at 10:00am to watch the live stream <https://www.facebook.com/espresbyterian/>

Additionally, bulletins and an online hymnal have been put on the website and can be found at <https://www.espresbyterian.com/worship/sunday-bulletin/>

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