



November 20, 2020

Dear Colleagues in Ministry,

Grace and peace we bring you in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ. As we again prepare for our annual pilgrimage to the manger, we give thanks for your faithfulness to the Gospel and the opportunity to serve alongside you. Your resilience and creativity throughout this year have transformed the all-too-familiar adage of the church, “we never did it that way before,” to claiming our identity as “disciples daring to dive into digital depths” – trusting God’s faithfulness will carry us. We at the Presbytery of Philadelphia are grateful for the unique ways our covenant community has borne witness to both God’s relational nature and marks our identity as Presbyterians.

The reality of COVID-19, along with the resurgence of racism and social injustices, has occupied our minds and hearts over most of 2020 - changing the very way we live, worship, and work. Even today, we have learned of two additional deaths due to this unrelenting virus that has plagued the globe. Yet, throughout the unknowns and uncertainty of these times, we have leaned into the power of the resurrection – rising up to new expressions of our ministries and life together.

As the Presbytery of Philadelphia, we are committed to strengthening our witness by coming alongside our congregations. This past year, through our Ministry and Leadership Incubator, we launched Vital Congregations and Cultivating Enough in the Care of Clergy initiatives. These ventures are focused on encouraging our congregational leaders as we lean into our identity as a Matthew 25 presbytery – strengthening the vitality of our congregations, resisting and dismantling all forms of racism, and working to eliminate economic injustice and poverty.

As we consider the road before us, we invite your Session to consider prayerfully how your church might express its continued partnership in ministry with the Presbytery of Philadelphia through your financial commitment for 2021.

As Presbyterians, we discern God’s call and decide how we are to respond to that call in the midst of community. Our per capita contributions support the infrastructure needed for our discerning and deciding our witness beyond the local congregation; the mission contributions reflect our unified expression of the ministry commitments resulting from the prayerful engagement of the broad range of voices, gifts, and experiences throughout our presbytery. Both are essential components to our life together.

Enclosed with this letter please find:

- A 2021 mission commitment pledge form – please indicate your congregation’s intended mission giving to the Presbytery, and through the Presbytery to the Synod and General Assembly.
- Your church’s 2021 Per Capita Statement with your individual congregation’s amount for the calendar year. Please note, as you prepare your congregation’s budget for 2021, the per capita contribution is calculated as \$30 per member based on your reported active membership for 2019 in the 2019 statistical report to the Office of the General Assembly.
- Per capita and Basic Mission Giving Information Inserts explaining the critical impact of these important contributions. We trust these bulletin inserts will be helpful in interpreting the unique and related aspects of our per capita and mission budgets in ways you and your members will appreciate.
- An informational flyer explaining online giving through the Presbyterian Foundation. At the request of some of our leaders, we are providing this resource as a vehicle for your congregation to safely fulfill your giving commitments.

We are excited, humbled, and inspired to be serving in ministry with you in such a time and place as this. We believe your congregational leaders and members will also be encouraged as they learn more about how they are a part of the many good things God is doing in and through us all as the Presbytery of Philadelphia.

May you find yourselves richly blessed by the abundant love of God in Christ as approach this thanksgiving and Advent season in new and challenging ways. May our annual pilgrimage to the manger remind us of how God continues to break into the darkness of human reality – we leave you with the words of the Gospel of John, “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.” May that light of Christ boldly shine through our witness – bringing hope into this world.

Peace and Blessings,



Rev. Kevin L. Porter
Stated Clerk



Rev. Ruth Faith Santana-Grace
Executive Presbyter