

Office Manager's Report
Penn Central Conference Annual Meeting
August 29, 2020

Dear Members and friends of Penn Central Conference,

When I joined Penn Central Conference's staff the week of Annual Meeting 2019, I was expecting a learning curve and new challenges. What I didn't expect was multiple staffing changes and a worldwide pandemic – but who could've?

Two months into my time at PCC, Director of Communications and Generosity Stephanie Rader-Titzel left PCC and some of her tasks were absorbed into my position. Starting in August 2019 I took over the editing and distribution of the eNews and other communications via Constant Contact, creating flyers, and reporting the OCWM figures to the conference's members and friends.

In November 2019, we released a streamlined and updated eNews as well as adding an occasional Hartman Center-focused supplement. In the past year we have had a 3% increase in email open rates as well as in click-through rates. We also increased our number of subscribers by over 12% in the past year (over a third of those in the past 90 days.)

UCC Yearbook reporting began in January and we decided that we did not have the staffing capacity to enter as many yearbook forms as in past years. We asked churches to enter their information on the DataHub and to only submit via paper form if they were unable to do so. Unfortunately the result was that reporting was down in 2020 from 2019. I will revisit this decision before Yearbook reporting begins in 2021 to find a way to increase reporting without overwhelming the staff.

In January 2020, much of my time was spent preparing for Clergy Sabbath – wearing both Wendy's and Stephanie's hats was quite a task.

As 2019 turned into 2020, the Receptionist and Search & Call Assistant position was eliminated in anticipation of the arrival of an ACM who would take over the search and call tasks. The non-S&C tasks that Laura Dalton handled were absorbed into my position when she left in February. Those include coordinating in-person meeting spaces, setting up Zoom meetings (which increased drastically as the pandemic entered the country) and answering phones.

As the pandemic reached the US in March, we increased the number of communications via email as information was changing rapidly. With Rev. Carrie Call's leadership, I sent out the Conference's guidelines on closing church buildings to in-person worship, and later guidelines to reopening those buildings. We also began various open forums via Zoom, which were communicated via email every week over the spring and into summer. Surveys were done to gather information on how churches were worshipping during the pandemic, what kinds of Zoom conversations clergy were interested in, and how churches were planning to reopen buildings for worship. But as the number of emails going out increased, so did our subscribers.

Part of PCC's online offerings were two Online Worship Services. These were designed for pastors to use as "supply pulpit" during weeks they took a much needed Sunday off. Zoë D'heedene and I coordinated the video files for those services and I was delighted to participate in by reading scripture and leading prayers of the people. The first video one went out on May 22, 2020 and became publicly searchable in June. It has over 900 views, the most viewed video on the PCC YouTube Channel. The

second one went out on July 2, 2020 and became publicly searchable in August. That video has over 200 views, among our top 5 most viewed videos.

As the summer winds down, Annual Meeting preparations have taken much of my time. A year ago, when I was experiencing my first Annual Meeting, I thought to myself “this will be the most challenging part of this new position!” Little did I know what other challenges were on the horizon!

I want to thank the board and members of Penn Central Conference for the encouragement, advice, and compliments during my first year at Penn Central Conference. I also want to thank the staff for coming together as a team and holding each other up during this most tumultuous year.

Respectfully Submitted,

C. Paul Keller

Office Manager, Penn Central Conference