

## **Covid-19**

This past year has been unlike any I have ever experienced in ministry. I know that this sentence is the same for each of you! I grieve the ongoing loss of life, community, family and social disruption along with the ongoing global chaos that has come to all of us in one form or another. The pandemic is far from over as it accelerates in many parts of the world, and vaccination rates continue to be low in many parts of our country. I want to encourage everyone to be sure that you get vaccinated and continue to maintain practices of wearing a mask and physical distancing in public spaces as an act of love and care for others. As Jesus calls us to abundant life, it is our role as people of faith to do all we can to ensure it for others. As those who are part of the global Christian community, I encourage you to read this important [article](#) written by the Rev. Jed Koball, who is one of our mission co-workers in Peru, South America where he discusses the vaccine roll out and inequalities in the world.

I want to say how in awe I am of the many ministries of this Presbytery and how each one has found ways to continue moving forward, trying new modalities of worship and gathering, building community and doing ministry. There has been a diverse set of “solutions” throughout the Presbytery, as our ministries are diverse. Each response though, has come out of deep faithfulness, dedication to ministry and love of others. Despite the hardships, it has been a joy to walk alongside each of you this past year.

If there is any way you or the ministry you are a part of needs a conversation, resourcing, or has a Covid-19 learning to share, please let me know. We are here to serve you.

We continue to update our Covid-19 resource page as things continue to shift and change. Please refer back to it frequently for updated information:

<https://psne.org/resources/covid-19-pandemic/>

## **Anti-Racism and Equity**

I want to express my gratitude to Jenny Peek and Kirk Louis for their able leadership through Year 1 of our Anti-Racism and Equity Committee. They have been doing intensive learning alongside our consultant, Jessica Vazquez Torres. As we move into the summer the committee is branching out to learning circles around the Presbytery. The Roundtable will be considering next steps with Jessica at our June 2021 meeting. This is essential work for the life and present-future of this Presbytery in faithfulness to Jesus Christ. So much of our lives is in the grip of white supremacy and the unfaithful cultural and personal habits it creates. However, this life is not where we are called to as the Church. In reality, we are called to break that culture as it is one of harm that is

visited upon many people and communities. I am eager for our next steps with *Crossroads Anti-Racism Organizing and Training*. We are deeply blessed to be able to work with them and have Jessica's many gifts in ministry present in the Presbytery.

### **Synod of the Northeast**

Our larger Synod community is going through a time of transition. Our new Transitional Leader for the Synod, the Rev. Dr. SanDawna Gaulman Ashley will be with us at this meeting. She provided one of our post-Easter worship services this year, which is housed on the Presbytery YouTube channel. I am so glad SanDawna is here and in ministry with us. There will be much transition coming up in the next few years in the Synod and I look forward to PSNE being a part of that.

### **Thank You**

I want to extend my thanks to everyone who has served in the Presbytery this past year. We have asked a lot of you, and committee and Presbytery service this year has been very different than imagined. I want to especially thank the Rev. Anne Marie Meyerhoffer, the Rev. Candy Whitman, and Elder Clare Schimpf who led our Trustees and COM respectively. All three are concluding their service and Anne Marie and Candy are off to new adventures in ministry in new Presbyteries. I will miss working alongside each of them and am grateful for the difficult tasks they took on this year and led with much faithfulness and skill.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the staff of the Presbytery, all of whom have gone over and above duty this last year in this unprecedented time. We have a great staff in this Presbytery and I hope you agree with me and will also thank them!

I look forward to our next year in ministry together. This is a liminal season where we are slowly moving out of one experience and into the next. We are not exactly sure what is in store for us. I am sure though, of God's faithfulness, the clear prophetic call to be disciples of Jesus and the constant companionship of the Spirit that is always dancing in front of us, beckoning us into the next new place.

Peace and Blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shannan".

Rev. Shannan Vance-Ocampo, General Presbyter