

2021 Moderator Report

Reflection time is often helpful to pause a moment from our daily life to see the world around us and where God may be leading us. My final days as Moderator also makes me think about what his plans may be for me in the days to come. Every day is a blessing!

Looking back on 2020 and the impact and effects of Covid19 on our church family, we have each been impacted in some way. I can't help but think that this may all be part of God's plan. He has sent plagues before to change our behavior. We continually are challenged to change and I have often heard that we are resistant to change. We like things to stay the way they have always been, allowing us to stay in our comfort zone. My personal experience has shown me that God is always pushing us to get out of our comfort zone in order to do his will. I have been amazed at how creative and innovative many of our churches have been at making changes in how they have continued to be church and serve their members. We can change when we are not afraid to try something different. How can we eliminate our fears? It is human nature to fear the unknown, therefore we can get over our fears by conversations and learning more about how to face them with knowledge, understanding, faith, hope, and trust. Where have I heard those words before? As I have learned more about our local churches in the Penn West Conference over the last number of years I have seen how truly blessed we are with very talented members serving passionately, not only their own church, but the Conference through our many committees. Unfortunately, I'm sorry to say, this is only the tip of the iceberg! There are many more of our members in Penn West Churches that have been blessed with all kinds of passions and talents as well, but we may not have called them to serve. Someone once told me the kindest words we can say to someone are, "Can you help me/us?" Consequently, they are sitting out there in their comfort zone, perhaps in fear of the unknown to try something new.

Do you remember when you were called to serve? I bet it was someone you looked up to and respected that asked you! Haven't we also been instructed somewhere, to make disciples? This process will also enable us to be a mentor to these new disciples to encourage them to utilize their talents and help them grow into their discipleship. These new disciples need to include the younger generations, so that the Church can benefit from this new perspective, and live on for future generations. We also can benefit from the overall conversation and collaboration between our local churches when we gather at Conference and Association workshops. We can learn from each other and help not only our own church but other churches in the Penn West Conference, doing God's work and growing in discipleship.

How about we **each** take the time that we have been blessed with today to reach out to potential disciples? Encourage them to get involved by attending our Annual Gathering and workshops that may be of interest to them. Help them to check out our website and the many committees which might stimulate their passions and ask them to help us.

Tom Croner, Moderator