



# HEARTLAND CONFERENCE

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
N. KY • OH • WV

**March 26, 2020**

Heartland Conference and Association Shared Staff COVID 19 Pastoral (Letter #3)

Dear Pastors and Congregational Leaders:

As this time of sheltering at home lengthens and the sense of isolation for all of us deepens, we want to offer a continuing word of encouragement and support. We recognize this is an unprecedented season in which to do ministry. Never before has everyone had to shift the way in which ministry is done in such a dramatic way and under such an urgent timeframe.

We pray God's continuing love, encouragement, and strength all around you. We seek to be available to you both to listen and to facilitate the sharing of resources that may be helpful to you. We recognize that across the conference there are widely varying contexts and so some resources will be more helpful than others, depending on your congregation's setting and size (rural, urban, suburban). If there are particular needs that you have, we urge you to let us know. Our emails are listed below and you may contact any one of us.

We also recognize that not all ministry is congregational in nature. For those of you serving in specialized settings of chaplaincy or other non-parish settings, we are equally concerned for your support. A zoom call for those in specialized settings is listed in the resources that follow this letter. We recognize that the widely varying schedules which chaplains carry will make it difficult for one time that fits the needs of all and are committed to continuing to offer such space at other times so that your needs may be honored.

It is our strong recommendation that in-person worship be suspended through the end of April, at least. It seems clear from the counsel of the Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia Departments of Health that this will help both in the effort to flatten the curve of COVID 19's emergence throughout the geography of the Heartland Conference and help to prevent COVID 19's resurgence through contact which comes too soon. We will continue to update our counsel in this regard based on the most recent reporting of these departments of health.

We realize that this counsel will necessarily require alternatives related to how Holy Week and Easter are celebrated this year and have arranged for two zoom conversations early next week to provide an opportunity for sharing of ideas.

We pray God's blessings on you and the ministry you are engaging. As we seek to be supportive and empowering of you in these days, there are resources about worship, generosity and finances, summer camp, rural ministry, chaplaincy, and also a few other meeting updates including the postponement of the National Youth Event that may be helpful to you.



Please remember that your work matters not only to your specific community of faith but also to the world. You are not alone. We are here for you. We close this letter by offering to you this blessing from Ephesians:

“[We] pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love.” 18  
[We] pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Indeed, may it be so for all of us!

Your Pastoral Partners in Ministry

Rev. Carl Robinson – [crobinson@sonkaucc.org](mailto:crobinson@sonkaucc.org)  
Rev. Patricia Battle – [patricia.cseoa@heartlanducc.org](mailto:patricia.cseoa@heartlanducc.org)  
Rev. Dan Busch – [dibusch@nwoa.org](mailto:dibusch@nwoa.org)  
Rev. Nayiri Karjian – [nayiri.agm@livingwaterone.org](mailto:nayiri.agm@livingwaterone.org)  
Rev. Dave Long-Higgins – [dave@heartlanducc.org](mailto:dave@heartlanducc.org)