

## **2020 Moderator's Report**

Welcome to the pandemic- this is a year like no other. No one expected to be dealing with issues of public health in our congregations this past year, but your Conference Council and Executive Committee have risen to the challenge.

Between March and June, the Executive Committee meet weekly to assess the situation as the pandemic spread, giving guidance, scheduling communal activities, and sharing best practices through updates emailed to pastors and church leaders. Conference Council met frequently as well, to discuss and vote on important issues like declaring a fallow year at DuBois Center, and taking an emergency loan to cover the sudden drop in Conference income. We continue meeting as needed between bi-monthly scheduled meetings. As the nature of COVID-19 changes and adapts, we will too.

I am grateful for the commitment of the Council members, who were available via text, email and Zoom to do the work of the Conference at a moment's notice when pressing issues came up. I am also grateful for the dedication and leadership of our Conference Minister, Rev. Shana Johnson, who tirelessly kept an eye on the horizon, guiding us toward ways to support the pastors and congregations of Illinois South Conference.

I know it has not been an easy adjustment to suddenly move to online worship, upend traditions and rituals of your congregation, and cope with constantly changing recommendations on safety. All I can say is, hang in there- we're all doing the best we can. This is a time for grace and persistence.

We do not know what the future holds with this pandemic which is far from over. We do not know with certainty where we will head with DuBois Center, in this season of change. We do not know where our nation is heading amidst cries for justice and political turmoil. But, let us not borrow trouble by focusing only on those things which keep us up at night. Instead, let's focus on what we are called to do. I believe we are wrapped in the hand of God, and if we move forward boldly being the church- helping those in need, welcoming all to the table- we will discover what God has planned for Illinois South next.

Submitted by

Dr. Jill Baker, Moderator