


THE VINE



A NEWSLETTER OF THE CATAWBA CLERGY NETWORK

A Time for Resilience

The light shined in the darkness, and the darkness could not overcome it. -John 1:5

Few people know the darkness and pain that the pastor knows. In December you may have heard more and more often from the people without enough food, money, family, work, or love. You may have heard from those with too much pain, exhaustion, anger and loss. And you have felt deeply for them all.

Some of you have led or attended or encouraged others to attend a “Longest Night Service,” December 21, but the incremental movement toward light is imperceptible to most. This is the reason that so many have looked to you as the light bearer. It is a heavy burden, an impossible task if you are the light. But you are not the light. As bright, witty, thoughtful and attractive as you are, you only share the light of Christ. Born of Mary and raised from death, the light that darkness has never been able to put out, lives and shines in you.

One of the goals of the Catawba Clergy Network is to help you bear that light and be resilient in the midst of the darkness. Resilience can be strengthened spiritually and physically, through regular prayer and times of devotion, as well as getting enough rest, drinking plenty of water and the other things you know your spirit and body need.

As the days are still aggravatingly short, make time to reach out to your friends in ministry. They may appreciate hearing from you even more than you know. Check in with your colleagues in your Community of Practice and let them know that you appreciate the light that they are carrying, wherever they are. Resilience isn't easy, especially in grey times, but light burns brighter together.

With every blessing for the Christmas Season and New Year,

William Hoyle
Interim Director
WMHoyle23@catawba.edu



With Great Appreciation

we pray God's blessings
on these three departing friends



LEFT TO RIGHT

BETTY MORTON

**SHANNON AXTELL
MARTIN**

**HANNAH
HUTCHEN
MCNEELY**

Shannon Axtell Martin dreamed up the Catawba Clergy Network six years ago, over many conversations with alumni and local clergy people (including the Rev. Kendra Joyner-Miller!) about their needs in ministry. It has been such a gift for her to watch the network grow and evolve over the years, and to get to walk alongside such gifted and compassionate clergy people for this season. Thank you all! She is leaving her position at Catawba in January to be with her three kids full time. And, who knows what new dreams may come her way in the future. May the Lord bless you and keep you and continue to strengthen and sustain you in your ministry!

After serving with Catawba's Lilly Center, Clergy Network and Campus Ministry staff for several years, **Hannah Hutchens McNeely** will be transitioning away from her position with Catawba College in January 2024. This decision made by Hannah and her husband, Emory, after prayerful consideration. Hannah will be making this transition to be able to spend time closer to home with her little one. Hannah has thoroughly enjoyed her time serving with the Catawba Clergy Network staff and getting to know each and every one of you. Her behind the scenes work for us has been invaluable.

Betty Morton is retiring from her work with the Catawba Clergy Network and has handed her responsibilities to Paula Bohland. Since the beginning of the Network, Betty has been the key leader with our Communities of Practice, clergy groups. She has trained facilitators and overseen their work, led workshops, directed studies and been a strong partner in the work of the Network. Betty will continue her work of life coaching, and spiritual direction through the company she founded, Rise Coaching. Betty can be reached at www.Risecoachingllc.com

Help Us Grow the Clergy Network

The Catawba Clergy Network is here to support the ministry of clergy, and your recommendation to a friend or colleague might be the most powerful selling point growing the network. Many clergy don't share their professional challenges with anyone and are hesitant to share with those who don't understand and have not "walked that walk."

Joining the Clergy Network is the first step to joining a powerful Community of Practice group, meeting monthly with a trained facilitator and receiving financial support to enhance ministry. Invite someone you know to explore joining the Catawba Clergy Network and consider a Community of Practice group. Groups are assembled around a variety of topics, from location, to stage in ministry, to topics and more. **Information on the CCN will be shared at a free lunch January 10 on campus.** Email ClergyNetwork@Catawba.edu for info or reservations.

PAULA BOHLAND – NEW COP COORDINATOR

Betty Morton retired from her role as Catawba's Clergy Communities of Practice Coordinator in November. We all wish her well and offer gratitude for her service as she embarks in new activities.

As Betty stepped away, I have been transitioning into the role of coordinating the Communities of Practice for the Clergy Network. I am settling into the position and looking forward to being of service to each of you and your groups. I had the opportunity to meet several of you at Clergy Days and then again on the Facilitators meeting in November.

I am pleased to meet you here in the newsletter. Allow me to share a bit more about myself.



PAULA BOHLAND

I have been involved with Ecumenical projects for more than 15 years. I served for 10 years in the mission field as the executive director of a Christian based organization that worked to educate children living in poverty in Guatemala. In this role I supported and coordinated the mission teams and ministries of congregations, Pastors, and churches from many faiths, in all parts of the US and Canada. I have also worked in a life coaching capacity for a large congregation and owned a grant writing/consultancy company which focused supporting nonprofit and Christian based organizations to obtain grants and fund projects.

I hold a Master of Social Work and certifications in mindset and business coaching. I live in Salisbury with my son, a senior in high school

I am happy to be in this position and look forward to getting to know each of you personally, supporting your groups and assisting you to renew yourself through the COP ministry. Feel free to email me with questions or needs at Paulabohland@Catawba.edu.

36th Annual Service of Lessons and Carols



The Omwake-Dearborn Chapel was aglow with beauty and majestic worship this year. Mark your calendars now for an amazing worship experience. Next year's Lessons and Carols Service will be held on November 25, 26 and 28.



Clergy Days 2024 - Looking Forward



We are in the planning process for the Fall 2024 Clergy Days. If you have thoughts about 2023 or ideas for 2024, including keynote speakers, workshop leaders or other things, please send us an email at ClergyNetwork@Catawba.edu



This year Catawba College had a Christmas Door Decoration Contest. The Chapel took the 4 Gospels for our 4 office doors. The Clergy Network's effort for the Gospel of John did not win, but we are trying to be resilient and shine in the darkness!



A NEW YEAR BLESSING THROUGH OUR COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

One of our Clergy Network members wrote us this week about her
Community of Practice.

Ministry was never intended to be a solitary endeavor, and I find immense gratitude in the incredible community of clergy women with whom I share this sacred journey. Affectionately named the Midwives, our cohort is dedicated to aiding in the rebirth of the divine within our ministries. This community serves as my well of inspiration, providing a source for creative ideas, a space to request prayers for my family, and a forum to navigate the complexities of leadership. The laughter and tears we share, coupled with their ability to ignite my curiosity and offer unwavering encouragement, make this cohort an invaluable aspect of my professional and personal life. The Catawba Clergy Network reinforces the importance of regular gatherings within our cohort, emphasizing the creation of dedicated time and space for both spiritual and leadership development.

- Rev. Kim Priddy, Sedgefield Presbyterian

If you have a colleague or friend who might be interested in joining the Catawba Clergy Network and could benefit from being part of a community of practice, have them email us, or send us their information so we can be in touch. **An informational lunch will be held here in the chapel on January 10 to learn more. Reservations required.**

*You're
Invited!*

**CATAWBA CLERGY NETWORK
INFORMATIONAL LUNCH
NOON
JANUARY 10, 2024
OMWAKE-DEARBORN CHAPEL
RSVP TO
CLERGYNETWORK@CATAWBA.EDU**

