Why support the Shalom Fund?

“With great power, they gave witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Great grace was upon them. And no one among them lacked anything.” (Acts 4.33-34)

The COVID-19 virus outbreak has brought unprecedented change and challenge across the communities in our Conference, unlike what many of us have experienced in our lifetimes. In our Conference’s most vulnerable communities, the needs have become apparent immediately: food and support, shelter and prayer. Alongside the needs have come opportunities to offer relief in ways that allow us to express our love of God and neighbor so that “no one among us will lack anything.”

Our Conference launched the Shalom Fund to help our congregations and ministries respond to members and neighbors in ways that provide support for basic and essential needs. **Our goal is to raise at least $100,000 to sustain congregations and communities through this crisis.**

Leadership ministers have done initial assessments around four areas of need: congregations, pastors, members, and neighborhoods. The needs have been immediate for those who have lost employment (at least 1 in 6 workers in Pennsylvania) and for those who fall in the gaps of government social service initiatives. This is our opportunity to be the Church, remembering that Jesus tells us that he is present whenever we feed the hungry or provide water for the thirsty. Our congregations and ministries have already begun to respond:

- In North Philadelphia, **Crossroads Community Center** is a long-term presence that has become even more crucial in a time when critical needs for food and support become more apparent.
- In South Philadelphia, **Nations Worship, Centro de Alabanza, Indonesian Light, and Philadelphia Praise congregations** are joining together to provide food and support, distributing potatoes, rice, noodles, and eggs to members and neighbors.
- In Allentown, PA, **Ripple Community Inc** and **Ripple Church** are meeting the basic needs for food and support for persons who live on the margins in one of the Pennsylvania cities where COVID-19 has become most prevalent.
- In Tampa, FL, Pastor Roy Williams of College Hill congregation has declared, “We made a commitment that people wouldn’t die of hunger in the midst of the virus.” **College Hill** joined with **Shalom and North Tampa congregations** in extending their ministry of food and support in this vulnerable time.

The Shalom Fund empowers our congregations and ministries by making sure our members have enough resources to represent the peace of Christ in their neighborhoods. This is a real and immediate crisis. Our Conference is uniquely positioned to respond in tangible ways that care for the most vulnerable members of our body and, at the same time, to extend that care to our communities, in the way of Jesus.

We have already begun to respond to urgent needs. **Will you consider sharing your resources—rainy day funds, congregational endowed funds, stimulus checks, gas money—so that our witness can together go out with great power across our Conference?**

Our Christian witness is tested and strengthened in times of crisis. Now is such a time, as we extend the great gift of grace that we have received in this season of remembering and celebrating the resurrection, and as we look toward Pentecost … with hope.