



## Friends

June 26, 2019

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We met up with old friends and new friends. Yesterday, the Presbytery staff held its third remote office day; this one at Wilson's Coffee & Tea in Racine. We invited people from the area to stop by for something sweet or strong, and they came! A long-time pastor, our Foundation treasurer, a church administrative assistant, and church members gathered at a back table for conversation. People came and went as their schedules permitted. It was a nice time to do a little business, but mostly to catch up with old friends.



But, we also made new friends. Judy Jaggard and Kathy Dummer escorted the two delegates from the Dangme-Tongo Presbytery in Ghana, who are visiting Milwaukee Presbytery before heading today to the Ghana Mission Network meeting in Erie, Pennsylvania. Rev. Samuel Atteh Odjelua and Rev. Seth Adzokatse joined the group at Wilson's, settling in easily.

Friends are easy to make when we share something in common.

Maybe it's geography or schools or sports teams; those are quick points of connection that can allow friendships to form. Sometimes it's our shared dislike of something. I remember telling my dad that I knew my boyfriend (now husband of 31 years) was "the one" because we both avoided the strawberry flavor of our Neapolitan ice cream.

In the case of Samuel and Seth, we share a faith, and that's a powerful bond. From that starting point, we can explore our other points of connection, and we can observe our differences. We can learn from each other and seek out new ways of being the church in this day and age. We often speak of broadening our perspective by listening to our community. That's absolutely important, but God doesn't restrict us to the two square miles around our church building. How blessed we are to have international partners who face and overcome similar struggles to our own and who help us to see our own ministries with more clarity.

This week, I will be attending the Ghana Mission Network meeting with them and with church leaders from across three Presbyterian denominations in the US and internationally. I want to learn what's working well for them and how that might be applied in Milwaukee Presbytery. I want to deepen my faith through the stories that they will share and to offer my own reflections. I want to catch up with old friends who will be attending, and I want to make new friends. In our shared bond of faith, we are given a blessed opportunity to connect deeply.