The Charge of Rev. Dr. Percesepe to the West Center Congregational Church:

“Bronxville, You Have No Idea!”: A Charge to the West Center Congregational Church Bronxville (Yonkers) NY

We have heard the speakers.

Kris, you are charged to

Serve this congregation;

To listen to this congregation;

To share the work of this congregation

In this congregation’s DNA

Is the heart of a thoughtful, engaged

Christianity, one that embodies the

Democratic traditions of our nation

And is dedicated to serving all in this community

Regardless of border or zip code,

The abandoned affluent, the accompanied

Poor, the workers who move like ghosts

Invisible, slip in and out to prepare meals, wash dishes,

Turn down the covers of a bed, scrub a floor.

I charge you to listen in stillness to the timeless

Word of God; to speak the truth as modeled by

Jesus, the wounded healer; to endure the hard

Conversations; to confront the power of a heartless Empire;

And do not be afraid to preach from your scars; Hold fast to

What is beautiful and good and true and just; Soothe the

Suffering, comfort the afflicted, shield the joyous;

Gather the people in exile during these last days of a corrupted White Jesus and reveal the power and promise of an ontologically Black Jesus, but above all, keep your people in prayer, and feed them.

To members of this congregation,

Present and scattered: Be the

Gathered people of Christ;

Share in Kris’ journey as she

Listens and leads with you.

Allow her to make you uncomfortable when

She speaks difficult truths.

Take risks with her, as you together discern your

Path forward. Trust your pastor on the small things;

Challenge her on the big things.

Together witness the heralding of God’s Dream.

Do not stay in this church

Do not become entombed in these four walls,

For Jesus has gone out ahead of you and

Expects you to follow.

Do not be sentimental about your past,

Satisfied with your present,

Or in despair for what is to come.

With the Risen Christ and your pastor

Go forth into the world;

Be not afraid of what you see there.

Enter all those places where people

Still search for the stillspeaking God,

The One who has promised liberation.

So do the work

Stand with the weak and challenge the powerful;

Listen to each other with charity;

Treat each other with magnanimity.

Risk the deep love we know in Jesus.

And in time of trouble, call on the ancestors

Who are required to come to your aid, and

Stand up and lift up your heads

Because your redemption is drawing near.

Finally, do not merely speak the Gospel

But live what the resurrection has given you,

That our words say our work is never in vain:

That even in the midst of winter, there is hidden

New life ready to sprout

So that with courage and love we can face the future.

Go together with Kris

And as you tread this territory seeking justice and truth

Beware of over-defending: a doctrine, a position, an opinion,

A person, a nation, an ideology. Recall that this is, because that is;

This is not, because that is not. So, all things rely upon each

Other in order to be. Therefore, come together to preserve

Not only your own identity but that of others

Who are your neighbors.

Keep your pastor bathed in prayer.

Do the work.

Do not tarry.

Do not stay here.