



PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE



Empowering churches to proclaim the reconciling love of Christ.

A Message from PCC

March 4, 2020

Dear Friends of Penn Central Conference -

There is an old Asian proverb that says, "The mind makes a wonderful servant but a terrible master." The proverb speaks to the common human experience of suffering created by the thoughts people sometimes find marching through their brains. The point of the proverb is that the mind can be a wonderful problem-solving tool, but also a tyrannical ruler of a person's mood, emotions and well-being. In some sense, the happiness we all seek is significantly related to the thoughts or stories we tell ourselves about the reality we experience. There is no doubt that real suffering occurs when hurtful things occur in our lives. In acceptance therapy this is called "clean" pain. "Dirty" pain however, concerns the thoughts about how bad life is. In this view unhappiness occurs not simply as a result of a painful situation, but because of painful thoughts or the stories we create around the event.

If you think about any issue that has troubled you for a while like a spouse's addiction, a child's misbehavior, or your own physical health, you can see how worrying about the problem has been to no avail. Martha Beck, author of *Finding Your Own North Star* states, "No doubt you have tried valiantly to control this issue but are your efforts working? The answer has to be no; otherwise you would have solved the problem long ago. What if your real trouble isn't the issue you brood about so compulsively but the brooding itself?"

Beck notes that "acceptance, detachment and surrender are the pathways to freedom and healing". Acceptance, detachment and surrender are traditional Christian practices that are now being adopted as viable psychotherapeutic devices. Practices such as mindfulness training or focusing teach us to detach by paying attention to our thoughts in non-judgmental and compassionate ways. For example Beck states, "When we find ourselves using words like should or ought we're courting 'dirty' pain. Obsessing about what should be rather than accepting what is, we may try to control other people in useless, dysfunctional ways. The result is an emptiness that we usually blame on our failure to get what

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Outdoor Ministries

Upcoming Retreats:

Confirmation Retreat - March 27 - 29

What is Good Leadership? with Rev. Dr. Carrie Call - April 14 - 15

Learning to See - A Photography Retreat with Nelson Dodson - April 27 - 29

Pride Retreat for LGBTQ Folks & Allies - May 29-31 (details to come)

SUMMER CAMP REGISTRATION IS OPEN! Early bird pricing for those who pay in full before March 31, 2020. Learn more and register at <https://hartmancenter.com/summer-camp/>

Golf Outing Fundraiser - May 9 - Fairview Golf Course - Quentin (Lebanon), PA - Registration Open

Prayers for Penn Central Conference

Ephesians 6:18 (NLT)

Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.

This week, we pray for each other as we continue to live into God's calling...

Christ Church UCC, Elizabethtown

Salem UCC, Elizabethtown

Bethany UCC, Ephrata

Zion's Reformed UCC, Ephrata



Message from the Conference cont'

we want. Actually it comes from refusing to accept what we have."

During this time of Lent, preparations for Easter and the assault of media pronouncements, take time to compassionately observe the stories you tell yourself about family members, co-workers or government officials. Loosen their hold and feel the joy, peace and love available to all as children of God.

Julian of Norwich, a 14th Century mystic who lived during the Black Death, was quite familiar with personal and societal suffering. Yet she is one of our foremost teachers of detachment and compassion in the midst of suffering and yet she affirms for us again today that all shall be well. Hers is an optimism that is not born of naïve idealism, but an ongoing trust in the mysterious and providential love of God. Her affirmation of faith is as apt today as it was in her own day:

"All shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well."

Scott M. Watts, M.S., M.Div., LPC, NCC

Penn Central Conference

Facilitator of Care to Clergy and Clergy Families

Upcoming Events

Stephen Ministry Introductory Workshop - Palm Lutheran Church, Palmyra - March 14, 9:00AM - 1:00PM

Mended Heart Lenten Concert/Potluck - Salem UCC, Elizabethville - March 15 - 3:00pm

York Association Earth Day Anniversary Weekend w/ Jim Antal - Mt. Zion UCC, York - April 18, 9:00AM

Pastoral Colloquy 2020 "Building a Just Peace in an Unjust World: Learning with and from Our Anabaptist Colleagues" - In collaboration with our German Partners - July 26-30, 2020

Welcome and Hospitality are major themes of our UCC culture. You have the opportunity to provide welcome and hospitality to a guest from Germany during the weekend before and/or after the PCC/UEK Pastoral Colloquy. Hosts are needed throughout the conference to host German visitors, primarily single individuals and couples, from July 24-26 and/or from July 31 to August 2. If you have a guest room, an open heart and a passion to share yourself with new friends, contact Julie Holm

(julie@bvfoc.org or 814-349-5515). Join us in providing a warm welcome for our overseas guests.

The Perfect Blend: Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations—A day with author Bishop Robert Schnase—Saturday, September 19, 2020—Lancaster Theological Seminary, Santee Chapel—Seating is limited, registration required. Register at pccucc.org/register-for-an-event

PLANNING AHEAD:

Annual Meeting - June 12-13, 2020

Sign up for our eNews—click the link at pccucc.org!

As new cases of the coronavirus (CoVid-19) are reported in the United States and around the world, the church is called to education, caution and common sense. Here are a few basic guidelines for congregations.

- * Good hygiene helps prevent the spread not only of coronavirus but also of colds and flu!
- * Members, ministers, ushers -wash your hands frequently—with soap and water and for at least 20 seconds.
- * Sneeze or cough into the crook of your elbow or a tissue, not your hand. Wash immediately after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.
- * Avoid touching your face, especially your mouth, nose and eyes, with unwashed hands.
- * Regularly disinfect surfaces frequently touched including keyboards, desktops, elevator buttons and door knobs.
- * Use hand sanitizer.
- * Avoid close contact with someone who is sick.
- * Stay home if you are sick.

Contact us!

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