

# PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE



Empowering churches to proclaim the reconciling love of Christ.

## A Message from PCC

October 13, 2021

Dear Members & Friends of Penn Central Conference,

*A generous person will be enriched, and one who gives water will get water. (Proverbs 11:25)*

*Those who are generous are blessed, for they share their bread with the poor. (Proverbs 22:9)*

I love these two passages from Proverbs because they tie generosity directly to material goods. The gifts of water and bread are reflective of gifts that sustain life. If you have ever given water or bread to someone in need, you know how true this is. These days my thoughts about generosity are focused on what we give to others that is not money-related. I discussed this with Lancaster clergy this week and I was moved by the list of ways God had been generous and the ways we have been generous with one another that have nothing to do with money.

Participants talked about how individuals are generous with time, attention, forgiveness, presence, patience, prayer, encouragement and praise. We also recognized how individuals can be generous with harmful things – generous with criticism, or condemnation, in contrast to being generous with grace. When asked about God's generosity they listed mercy, patience, the indwelling with humanity through Jesus, the marvels of creation, and the remarkable gift of our own bodies and our ability to continue functioning in the world. God's generosity and our individual generosity are complex, multifaceted and numerous. By and large we experience generosity as positive and grace-filled, something reflecting abundance, liberality and the capacity to be magnanimous. (Such a great word!)

When it came time to discuss how churches or congregations can be generous, or what might lead someone to remark, "Oh they are a generous church!" the examples were immediately about money. I confess, I had to laugh. Yes, churches can be generous in terms

*Continues on back*

## Outdoor Ministries

In partnership with Lutheran Camping Corporation

### FALL FOLIAGE DAYS

October 24; 1-6 p.m. @ Kirchenwald and Nawakwa [Free] Come to camp for the afternoon to enjoy fall activities, worship, and a picnic supper.

### ANNUAL QUILT AUCTION

November 7 @ Nawakwa This fun-filled day of bidding raises money for the Lutheran Camping Corporation's Endowment Fund, which helps to financially sustain LCC's outdoor ministry activities and programs.

Learn more here: <https://pccucc.org/outdoor-ministry/>

## 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.*

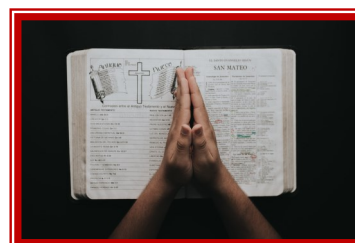
This week, we pray for each other as we continue to live into God's calling...

**Emmanuel UCC, Abbottstown**

**Christ UCC, Annville**

**Zion UCC, Arendtsville**

**St. John's UCC, Bellefonte**



## Message from the Conference cont'

of funds – for OCWM, missions, special offerings and the like. Yet it was obvious that when we discuss generosity in church, it's almost always about money. When pushed to go deeper we heard of generosity of acceptance, generosity of food, and generosity of welcome (especially for youth and children). The focus on generosity as connected to money is – ironically - one of the reasons we struggle with how to talk about money in church.

A culture of generosity is a different orientation. Instead of stewardship season every fall, a congregation begins with the spiritual orientation of each of the members' hearts. Gratitude is the root of generosity. Facilitating gratitude is the first step in encouraging a culture of generosity. And this culture is not to encourage more financial giving – although that may be an eventual result. Instead, the culture of generosity is what's created when a community focuses first on what it has already received from God, and then gives back out of that gratitude. The emphasis is on ways the congregation will give to others, not what it will get from them. This is easier said than done and requires a cultivation of gratitude all year so that it arises organically from within the congregation, rooted in gratitude for God's gifts.

There are many ways to begin this movement toward a culture of generosity. It begins in each of our hearts. And it flourishes when we let go of what (and how) we can get money from others and instead focus on how much we can give to the world.

Ask yourself in these harvest days, in what ways am I generous? Am I generous in my own home and relationships with attention? Time? Patience? How do I manifest my gratitude for all God has done for me? Take your answers to church and start sharing. God and the world await our generous hearts.

**Peace,  
Carrie**

Rev. Dr. Carrie Call  
Conference Minister  
Penn Central Conference



## Wider Church



The United Church of Christ is issuing a call to action to help the people of Haiti. A massive 7.2 earthquake on Saturday has killed nearly 1,300 people. Search and rescue efforts are expected to be hampered by Tropical Depression Grace, which came ashore on Monday.

To donate to this appeal, go to [www.ucc.org/giving/donate-now/general-donation/](http://www.ucc.org/giving/donate-now/general-donation/) and designate the gift to "Haiti Appeal." One can also mail a check made payable to the United Church of Christ, to 700 Prospect Ave., Cleveland, OH 44115. Please be sure to note "Haiti Appeal" on your check in the memo section, or in an attached letter.

## Contact us!

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