PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE

A Message from PCC

August 16, 2023

Members and Friends of Penn Central Conference,

'But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him saying, "Send her away, for she is crying after us.'" Matthew 15:23

While I find the entire passage concerning Jesus and the Canaanite woman a fascinating and important passage, it is verse 23 that I find most instructive for us. Think of how frequently Jesus remains silent moments when those around him excitedly demand answers or action. In this case, the disciples appear wanting to avoid drawing undo attention upon them.

Rudyard Kipling wrote, "If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you." This well describes many a circumstance wherein Jesus found himself. And in those moments, the words of Psalm 46:10 strike a rich chord, "Be still and know that I am God."

In silence Jesus expresses his dependence on and confidence in God and the Spirit for answers and direction to what is confronting him. Before ever speaking or acting, our Lord watched carefully the woman casting her 'mites' into the temple treasury. Quietly he drew in the dirt as men were demanding the stoning of a woman caught in adultery. We see him often praying in silence. And, silently, he confronts the sarcasm of Herod and Pilate in those sham trials. Yes, he does ultimately speak, but his words are sparse and to the point. In this manner is he not teaching us to wait patiently for the Holy Spirit's inspiration and not give in to the din of the crowd?

Continues on back

Contact us!

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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 UCC, Codorus

Salem UCC, Columbia

St. John's UCC, Dallastown

St. Paul UCC, Dallastown



I think that far too many occasions find us quick to react to situations without taking the time to think through how our words might be perceived or what unintended consequences might be the result. Clearly, in the story of the Canaanite woman seeking healing for her child, Jesus understood the difficult position in which he found himself. Whatever the reasons for his being in non-Jewish territory, he was now coping with a decision to uphold a rigid and highly biased view of traditional Jewish teaching or acting with mercy and compassion on one considered unworthy by his many critics. For even though in an alien land, word of his action would surely get back to leaders of the Temple on whatever course of action he chose.

St. Paul assures us that, "That the Spirit will intercede for us with sighs too deep for words." Jesus was not only modeling this for our edification but living it out in this account. Facing a serious dilemma, he prayerfully allowed silence to speak volumes and permit God's still small voice to inspire a helpful response.

Rick

Rev. Rick Luciotti

Clergy Care

Penn Central Conference

Hawaii Fires

The United Church of Christ, through Wider Church Ministries, is issuing a special appeal to provide essential items and long-term support to those impacted by wildfires across Hawaii, including the deadly wildfires on the island of Maui. https://support.ucc.org/hawaii-wildfires

The Hawaii Conference also shared a link to donate as well as other information and a prayer, you can read here: https://conta.cc/4439NJP

A message from Megan Swope, founder of The Period Project Harrisburg, to Penn Central Conference:

Hello! I want to continue to celebrate the contribution made at the Penn Central Conference Annual Meeting in June to The Period Project Harrisburg. As a result of those efforts, we were able to help MORE PEOPLE this month, spending less than we would have had to on our wholesale order for our Day of Impact 2023. As of August 9, ALL of the products collected by Penn Central Conference have been distributed as part of 1,000 period packs! Thanks to Penn Central Conference UCC, we were able to bless Bethesda Mission, She's Somebody's Daughter, Beacon Clinic for Health and Hope, Hershey Food Pantry, Hummelstown Food Pantry, Harrisburg City Schools, Brethren Housing, and Steelton-Highspire School District! Tonight, a menstruator may not have to suffer a loss of dignity, risk their health, or miss school or work… because of the generosity of Penn Central Conference donors. THANK YOU SO MUCH! I am truly honored and deeply grateful to Penn Central Conference UCC.

Lay Leader Boundary Awareness – Healthy Church Relations – This 90-minute introductory session for lay leaders in the church will introduce issues of power, multiple relationships, church money, social media, and health information sharing practices built around a behavioral covenant. It's sure to be an enlightening and empowering conversation. Please join this important conversation at 6:30pm on September 18th.

http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=betijzaab&oeidk=a07ejwrvht8d36a12ef