PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE

A Message from PCC

July 26, 2023

Greetings members and friends of Penn Central Conference,

"Have you understood all these things?" Jesus asked.

"Yes," they replied.

Matthew 13:51 (full scripture, Matthew 13: 31-33, 44-52)

The appointed Gospel this week focuses on several Parables of Jesus. Each begins, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like…" They do not begin, "The Kingdom of Heaven is the same as…" The difference may strike you as insignificant, but I believe otherwise.

Who among us has not been confronted by an advertisement or salespersons proclaiming their product is just like… The simple truth is it may be similar and have some of the same qualities, but certainly it is not the same. The differences may be difficult to perceive or appreciate. But they are not the same.

The parables assist us in capturing the attention of the listener by pointing to common objects we see every day and even marvel at, such as a tiny seed becoming a plant that dwarfs everything around it. But ultimately, the Kingdom of Heaven is unique and beyond our ability to fully comprehend or explain. For anyone to think otherwise is to inadvertently promote our own reasoning as having complete knowledge of God's word. It becomes an act of arrogance or self-entitlement. Frankly, I believe the parables serve to remind us of our constant need for prayerful meditation upon God's word and of the humble stance any believer should take before God and neighbor.

I fear that we too often glibly pass over the parables and the spiritual and moral *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...

St. Paul's UCC, Bowmansville

St. Jacob's (Stone) UCC, Glenville

Salem UCC, Campbelltown

Chapel Hill UCC, Lemoyne



truths they describe. With the many agendas we attempt to promote, we simply invest far too little time and effort into teaching and encouraging the study of God's word for the benefit of our individual lives. There are frequent discussions concerning the need for scriptural and spiritual education, but far more time is invested in promoting a variety of agendas. An equitable balance among study, worship and mission is herein advocated. The final verses from this week's gospel are instructive, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old." The study and dialogue between what has been understood as fact and new insights is essential in preparation for any and all mission.

We must not conclude that the parables are charming, but old news, and that everyone knows their meaning. Let us not assume this to be true, but always encourage ongoing study, meditation and dialogue of scripture.

Rick

Rev. Rick Luciotti

Clergy Care Coordinator

Hartman Center Homecoming week

July 31 through August 5, 2023

We will be returning to Hartman Center Campgroun d in Milroy, PA as guests. Camping experiences for all ages, including intergenerational camps.

For more information, contact
Rev. Alice Rauch alirauch07@gmail.com (director) or Rev. Amelia Price aashivers@gmail.com (registrar)

https://penncentralconference.regfox.com/hartman-homecoming-week

2 night camps Monday, July 31 at 4PM through Wedne sday, August 2 at 4PM

Getting Started - Grades 1 and 2 ($125)

Intergenerational Camp ($125)

3 night camps Wednesday, August 2 at 4PM through Saturday, August 5 at 11AM

Intergenerational Camp ($190)

Camp of the Heart ($250)

5 night camps Monday, 07/31/2023 at 4PM through S aturday, 08/05/2023 at 11AM

Elementary - Grades 3 - 5 ($300)

Junior High - Grades 6 - 8 ($300)

Senior High - Grades 9 - 12 plus ($300)

Leadership - Grades 9 - 12 plus ($300)

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Synod Seconds – A Keystone-wide Conversation – Join conference staff and delegates from across the keystone state as we explore implementation of General Synod Resolutions and looks at snapshots of wider-church life. We'll be starting with 3 zooms this fall, September 11, October 16, and November 13 from 6:30-8 pm. All are welcome. Please register (registration link to come.)