PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE

A Message from PCC

February 28, 2024

Greetings friends and members of Penn Central!

Last week I attended a meeting in Cleveland for the Council of Conference Ministers. As part of that meeting we had opportunities to hear from our General Minister and President, leaders from the Ministerial Excellence, Support, and Authorization (MESA) team, our General Counsel, the Insurance Board, and the Council for Health and Human Service Ministries (CHHSM). I certainly will not tire you with all the details, but I do want to share a few reflections about what we heard.

Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson, our General Minister and President, spent quality time answering our questions and sharing reflections on what she sees ahead for the UCC. Karen Georgia holds the idea of a Broad Tent closely and affirmed that this is who we are as the UCC. She wondered aloud what would happen if pastors or laity from Open and Affirming and Faithful and Welcoming churches sat at the same table, or pastors/members from urban and very rural churches – what would our conversations be? Could talking about our own spiritual lives be a way of hearing one another? She believes that spiritual experience is a deep desire for many people right now. People are seeking ways to enter sacred experiences and practices to encourage that entrance. Karen Georgia is a poet and she spoke to how creativity has a way of bridging divides and may help us explore how to live together, since that is what we have been called to do. She will be with us at our Keystone meeting in June and will offer a sermon Sunday morning. She plans to include several of her poems in the worship service, and will offer a workshop on Saturday about Poetry as a Spiritual Practice. There is no doubt in my mind that Karen Georgia's leadership will encourage us to ask different kinds of questions and engage with one another in new ways. I am encouraged and hopeful – more than I have been in some time.

Our MESA staff gave a presentation on the new Manual on Church that is in review and revision stage

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Contact us!

PCC Office Staff

Rev. Dr. Carrie Call, PhD - *Conference Minister*
email: ccall@pccucc.org / Phone: 717-433-3196

Rev. Dr. Nora Driver Foust - *Associate Conference Minister*
email: nfoust@pccucc.org / Phone: 717-433-2587

C. Paul Keller - *Office Manager*
email: pkeller@pccucc.org / Phone: 717-652-1560

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, Shrewsbury

St. Matthew (Coleman's) UCC, Spring Glen

Bethel UCC, Spring Grove

Mount Zion UCC, Spring Grove



now. Nora and I have both read the draft and submitted our feedback on-line to the writing team. There are parts of this manual that will be very, very helpful to local churches. When the time comes, our Committees on Ministry and all the churches in our associations will have the opportunity to claim the manual as their own for their own practices. You will hear much more about this later in the year.

We also learned about the licensure process and how the designation of "Licensed Pastor" may be reintroduced to Associations depending on how the Committees on Ministry decide. (The recent Manual on Ministry discouraged the designation for a variety of reasons.) I know that this possibility will please various people across the UCC.

Our General Counsel, Heather Kimmel, discussed legal issues, focusing on the need for robust judicatory checks when a candidate is being considered for a church. If you are part of a search team, keep in mind that Nora and I can assist you with those checks (contacting the candidate's previous Conference) and it is very important for your own protection. Heather also lifted the reminder about 'politics and the pulpit' since we are now in an election year. Please know that I will be offering several zoom opportunities for reviewing the legal aspects of what a church and pastor can and cannot do when it comes to politics, so watch for the announcements about those.

Finally, the presentation by our Insurance Board leaders was a sobering reminder of the effects climate change has had on the insurance industry. The Insurance Board was created by the Council of Conference Ministers decades ago to provide reasonable coverage for churches. The IB's success depends on the participation of our churches. Church membership in the Insurance Board is voluntary and it provides a place for churches to come together in covenant for the benefit of all. Natural disasters (especially flood and fire) have wreaked havoc on UCC properties. Now is the time to review your church's insurance policies and contact me with questions so we can all be assured of coverage as our climate changes.

I am always grateful for the opportunity to gather with colleagues in Cleveland. Thank you for supporting me in my ministry with the national setting. I am especially grateful for a spirit of hope and new possibilities!

Peace,

Carrie

Rev. Dr. Carrie Call

Conference Minister

Penn Central Conference

Registration is now open for **HC Spirit camp at Hartman Center Campground and Retreat Center** - Sunday, July 28th through Saturday, August 3rd, 2024.

https://penncentralconference.regfox.com/hartman-homecoming-week-2024

Camp makes a great Christmas gift. Check out the summer options from our partners at Lutheran Camping Corporation's Kirchenwald (and Nawakwa)

https://www.lutherancamping.org/summer-camp/youth-summer-programs/

March 10, 2024 is One Great Hour of Sharing

One Great HOUR OF SHARING | ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING 75 1949-2024

OFFERING DATE MARCH 10, 2024

The proceeds from this offering channels resources for international programs in health, education and agricultural development, emergency relief, refugee ministries, and both international and domestic disaster response, administered by Wider Church Ministries, Global Sharing of Resources.

