



PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE



Empowering churches to proclaim the reconciling love of Christ.

A Message from PCC

Dear Friends and Members of Penn Central Conference,

I, therefore, a prisoner of the Lord, beg you to live a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called...making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:1&3, NRSV)

Today I am thinking about the church in relation to a conversation I had with a UCC pastor who asked me if there was a place for him in the UCC. It sounds absurd since he is ordained in the denomination. Yet I've had that question posed to me multiple times by a variety of people. In one case it may be a theologically liberal woman (was she too liberal? too universal?) and in another it could be a theologically conservative man (was he too conservative? too narrow?). I confess that the question, when it comes from some of our own clergy, causes my heart to ache. My spirit is also deeply troubled when I hear some say, when a church leaves the UCC, "Good riddance." How did we reach a point that we might celebrate this instead of grieving?

Perhaps this is a curse of being a teacher of UCC history and polity. I want to point to the rich, complicated, wide-ranging, challenging, liberating, and sometimes-terrible theology of all our predecessor bodies and remind people of our broad and beautiful theological tent. All of these streams of theological life joined together in 1957 because, according to the Basis of Union written in 1948, "we" had a devotion to God, a belief that denominations only exist in that they serve the church, and because in "confronting the divisions and hostilities of our world" we hear with a "deepened sense of responsibility the prayer of our Lord 'That they all may be one'." I confess that I marvel at this.

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Outdoor Ministries

"[Every]Body Of Christ" Youth/Confirmation Retreat

March 18-20 at Camp Nawakwa, located near Gettysburg. The weekend will begin at 7:00 on Friday evening and end with a closing program at 10:00 on Sunday morning. Cost is \$100 for 2 nights of lodging and 4 meals (3 on Saturday and breakfast on Sunday)

It will be a wonderful weekend full of fun activities, making new friends and being with old ones, learning and exploring, questioning and evaluating, relaxing and playing! As a reminder, this weekend away at Camp Nawakwa is for all Penn Central youth, grades 6-12! You are welcome to register anytime!

<https://penncentralconference.regfox.com/everybody-of-christ-confirmation-youth-retreat>

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...

Church of the Redeemer UCC, Hershey

Emmanuel UCC, Howard

Hummelstown UCC, Hummelstown

Faith United UCC, Ickesburg



Message from the Conference cont'

Now again we are living amid divisions and hostilities. Those divisions and hostilities have crept over us, infecting our churches in a way we have not seen since pre-civil war. I am not saying anything new. But I have been reminded lately of how seriously we are to take our role in preserving unity in the bond of peace as the body of Christ. We begin by modeling places of authentic acceptance and mutual respect. This might be some of the most difficult work we take on as churches. This does not mean that we tolerate abuse or destruction in the name of unity. But it does mean that we begin with ourselves, look deeply, and encounter our inner sinner, before we exclude, judge or reject others.

The UCC has been a broad theological tent since its formation. At local church settings it remains such. Visit the churches of Penn Central and you will see that our theological beliefs, perspectives, practices, and questions are wide-ranging. We do not all agree. We wrangle and argue and reconcile and argue again. Yet I am convinced that we remain one body. Our founding documents testify to the belief that our role was to aid in overcoming hostilities and divisions, not adding to them. May we all receive the grace to be voices and bodies joined in committed unity.

Peace,

Carrie

Rev. Dr. Carrie Call

Conference Minister

Penn Central Conference Save the Dates:

PCC's 60th Annual Meeting

Opening Plenary: 6:30PM, June 6, 2022

Workshops: 6:30PM, June 7-9, 2022

Business & Worship: 9:30AM, June 11, 2022

JOIN THE MOVEMENT - United Church of Christ Launched at the 2022 General Synod, the Movement toward Racial Justice is an invitation to demonstrate God's love and to partner with others who are working for the transformation of racism in our world so that we might foster flourishing lives for

all. Check out the website at jointhemovement-tucc.org

Every setting of the UCC, from local churches to global partners, has a role to play in expanding our practices of antiracism and strengthening our capacities as partners and participants in the burgeoning racial justice movements of our time. In this effort, story-sharing is a key component. Our stories show us not only who we are, but also inspire who we may become. Providing opportunities to encounter the antiracism journeys of others, Join the Movement will be a hub for churches within the United Church of Christ of story-sharing that draws others to participate and opens hearts to new possibilities and practices of racial justice.

The Christian church began as a movement towards a just world through the teachings of Jesus. As followers of Jesus, we believe it is our mandate to work for and seek justice, love, and compassion, as we join with and become our own Spirit-led movements toward racial justice. Go to the website to learn what churches are doing, find antiracism resources, and identify local and national practices that are unjust.

Contact us!

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