



The Keystone Connection

A Message to the Conference

April 07, 2026

Dear Keystone Members and Friends –

Jesus said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side.” (John 20:27a NRSV)

Post-resurrection appearances by Jesus are a strange mix of the spiritual (disappearing after speaking) and the physical (eating fish). The episodes read as ephemeral and solid at the same time. Their mysterious nature makes them some of my favorite passages in the gospels. The encounter with Thomas is no exception.

What I love about Thomas is his desire to experience the full physicality of Jesus as the crucified one. And perhaps we don't really think about how odd that is. One would imagine that resurrection implies total transformation, unlike the resuscitation of a corpse (e.g. Lazarus). We might assume that full transformation surely would include healing those wounds from the crucifixion, wouldn't it? And yet the resurrected Jesus appears to the disciples with unhealed wounds and all.

When I read the account of Thomas, I always think of Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (of Moravian fame). Zinzendorf recounts a story from St. Martin of Tours: as St. Martin was walking, Jesus appeared on the road, and the Saint was breathless at Jesus's radiance and glory. He called Martin's name and indicated he should admire Jesus's glory. At which time, voicing a suspicion, Martin demanded, "Where are your wounds?" and the Christ figure was revealed to be the devil. The devil, Zinzendorf believed, will try to lead us astray by appearing to us as Jesus, but without wounds. And we will be tempted to follow false representations of Jesus full of glory.

Why do the wounds matter? They matter because they demonstrate Jesus's true humanity. He entered into and understood human pain. Jesus knew grief and despair. He knew the beauty and limits of human flesh, and he knew ultimate torture and suffering in his own body. The wounds from the crucifixion remind Thomas (and us) that God embraced human physical existence and overcame human death. In Jesus' resurrected appearance he was imperfectly perfect. All our wounds, limits, suffering and physicality are recognized by the one who also suffered. And we will be embraced in his Kingdom as we too are made imperfectly perfect.

As one who has struggled with (and against) my physical self, this brings me comfort and hope. Thomas understood the wounds mattered for his faith to be complete. Grant that we may as well.

Peace,

Carrie

Rev. Dr. Carrie Call

Transitional Executive Conference Minister

Keystone Conference UCC

Keystone Conference of the United Church of Christ's first Annual Meeting will be held June 5-7 at Millersville University in Millersville. Overnight accommodations will be on campus as well as the DoubleTree Hilton in Lancaster. Registration is now open! Register here: <https://keystoneconference.regfox.com/2026-spring-meeting> (or go to keystoneucc.org and click on the Annual Meeting tab under News & Events.)

Our theme is "Joy at the Table Together" and our centering scripture is Acts 2:46-47 "Every day they met together, breaking bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God." The meeting will include a Service of Consecration for Keystone Conference.

Speakers will include Rev. Dr. Marcia McFee, author of Think Like a Filmmaker: Sensory-Rich Worship for Unforgettable Messages; Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ; Rev. Dr. Mary Luti, author of Do This: Communion for Just and Courageous Living; Rev. Greg Edwards, Executive Director of POWER Interfaith, Secretary Russell Redding, PA Secretary of Agriculture, and Rev. Freeman Palmer, Conference Minister for the Central Atlantic Conference.

Attention Youth Campers and Families,

Please read the following information carefully, as the Conference policy for supplementing youth summer camping has changed.

For the 2026 summer season, the Keystone Conference will campership or reimburse 30% of the cost for one youth to attend one summer camping experience. If a youth attends more than one camp during the summer, only one camp will be eligible for the 30% reimbursement. Please use the application for additional camps if this creates a hardship.

Learn more and download the application under the campership section of keystoneucc.org/mission-grants-committee/

Living Waters Camp & Conference Center Schellsburg, PA

Trustin' Jesus! Summer Camps

Fishing Camp - June 28 to July 2, for grades 6 to 12

Primary (grades K - 3) - July 5 to 11

Elementary Camp (grades 4 - 6) - July 5 to 11

Junior-Senior High Camp - July 12 - 18

Grandparent / Grandchild Camp is July 12 to 15

Learn more at livingwaterscamp.org

HC Spirit Camp is hosted at Hartman Center Campground, Milroy, PA . The theme for HC Spirit 2026 is "In the Wilderness." Camp runs from July 26 - August 1, 2026. Registration is now open—check hcspiritcamp.org for more info and registration