



PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

...equipping and empowering congregations and clergy for the declaration
and demonstration of the courageous love of Christ!

A Message from PCC

Hartman Center

October 16, 2019

Dear friends of Penn Central Conference,

"So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, 'Let me go, for it is day-break.' But Jacob replied, 'I will not let you go unless you bless me.'" (Genesis 32:22-26)

I read this passage at the beginning of the Board of Directors meeting on October 5th to those gathered. I knew it was a lectionary selection for October 20th and I had been thinking about it for several days. I knew that it kept cropping up in my mind because of the decisions we were facing at that meeting. I knew we would wrestle with them. And I knew we would need to hear a blessing by the end of the day.

Some passages of scripture lend themselves well to metaphorical interpretation. Sometimes that isn't the best use of scripture and the interpretations take us far afield. But this passage from Genesis lends itself well to reflecting on our lives as believers. In the Genesis version Jacob is said to be wrestling with "a man." In Hosea 12:4 the prophet claims that Jacob wrestled with "the angel," which explains why we often refer to Jacob wrestling with an angel on the banks of the river. This is the image we see depicted in artwork through the ages and the one that lends itself so well to our own reflections.

Which one of us hasn't wrestled within our faith? I mean wrestling to the point of pain, and tears, and almost being overcome. I have known it in my own life - in private moments and in public ones. At the time I would never have said it was an angel. I might have claimed the opposite. And I recognize now that this wrestling leaves us with a limp - as it did Jacob - we are changed and we carry our wounds within us. We may also carry a blessing, but only if we have asked for it.

Jacob's refusal to release the angel until it has blessed him is remarkable to me. Far from begging the angel to leave (as I've done

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Penn Central Conference Confirmation Retreat

The PCC Confirmation Retreat will be held March 27 - 29, 2020 at Hartman Center. This weekend is always a great opportunity for our confirmands to explore "Being The Church" and to connect with other youth.

Planning for this retreat is done by the Pastors and/or youth leaders of the participating churches. We will gather for an initial planning meeting on Monday November 18 from 1 - 3 pm at the conference office, and Zoom will be available.

Please contact Pastor Patty Dodds as soon as possible if your church is interested in participating. 717-502-2246 or Program@HartmanCenter.com

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, Selinsgrove

Mt. Zion Congregational, Shamokin

St John's UCC, Shamokin

Salem UCC, Coal Township



Message from the Conference cont'

many times, I admit), Jacob refused to release him - even in the midst of physical pain - and instead humbles himself in asking for a blessing. In response the angel asks for his name, and then changes it. What would it take for us to do the same? Could we ask God for a new name, a new sense of identity that reflects what we have been through? That would be a blessing not only to us, but also to those who come after us?

Whatever the wrestling includes - spiritual questions, vocational calling, momentous decisions, or existential anxiety and fear - demand of it a blessing. In the blessing we will find the hope for moving forward. Peace,

Carrie

Town Halls

You are invited to gather with others from your association (clergy and lay people alike) for fellowship and a light dinner of soup, sandwiches and dessert. (See dates and locations below.)

Conversation with Rev. Carrie Call will follow our dinner. She will provide updates about Penn Central Conference, touching on topics such as new staffing, updated strategic planning, and the Hartman Center.

Please bring your questions and concerns as well as your enthusiasm and ideas for our Conference!

Mercersburg Association
Monday October 28th, 6:00PM
First UCC, Carlisle

Central and Northern Associations
Tuesday October 29th, 6:30PM
St. John's UCC, Lewisburg

Lancaster Association
Wednesday October 30th, 6:00PM
Trinity UCC, East Petersburg

Lebanon Association
Wednesday November 13th, 6:00PM
Quentin UCC, Quentin

Upcoming Events

34th Annual Christmas Bazaar
November 2 8:00AM - 1:00PM

Salem UCC, Roherstown
2312 Marietta Ave, Lancaster PA

Devonshire Fair
November 6 & 7 9:30AM - 7:00PM
Colonial Park UCC

Upcoming Events

5000 Devonshire Road Harrisburg, PA 17109

Check out other upcoming events on our website:
<https://pccucc.org/calendar/>

Read our full weekly eNews:
<https://pccucc.org/enews-archive/>

Sign up for our weekly eNews:
Link at bottom of any page on www.pccucc.org

More From Hartman Center

Fall Women's Retreat: Living Well—In The Moment

Friday the 15th at 7 p.m. to Sunday the 17th at 11 a.m.
Leaders: Sue D'heedene and Winnie Kowalik. Register online

Fall Youth Retreat: Never Alone

Friday November 15, 2019 7:00 PM - Sunday, November 17, 2019 11:00 AM register online

Men's Retreat: Seasons of a Man's Life

Friday, January 17, 2020 at 7PM - Sunday January 19, 2020 at 1PM register online

Confirmation Retreat

Friday, March 27, 2020 - Sunday, March 29, 2020

Contact us!

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