



PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE



Celebrating 60 Years of Ministry

A Message from PCC

October 12, 2022

Members and friends of Penn Central Conference,

Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until day-break. (Genesis 32:24)

The story of Jacob wrestling with a man/angel/God from Genesis is in the lectionary this week. I always approach this passage with humble reserve. I do not want to trivialize it (making the wrestling somehow not so bad) and yet I am hesitant to claim such a difficult wrestling match for myself. After all, Jacob is a patriarch of scripture! However, wrestling with the Holy One is real.

When I was younger, deep wrestling came for me after I stood in Dachau Concentration Camp. It also came when I learned in detail about the means of forced conversion of southwest Native Americans by the Jesuits. These two wrestling matches resulted in tiny blessings, in time. After I had railed against God and struggled to believe anything could be redeemed, I learned of the concentration camp residents sharing bread. And I learned of those Christians who resisted what the Jesuits did. Inspiration was found in both, although just a handful in comparison to the evil. I wrestled with God in these two instances by asking how humanity could be created by God and yet capable of such systematic evil, and especially within the guise of the holy church.

There have been other times in my life when personal wrestling matches drove me to my knees. If God had appeared in the guise of a person in front of me, I would have shaken him/her in rage. I would have poured out all the burning questions and demanded a reckoning. Eventually the answers

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.

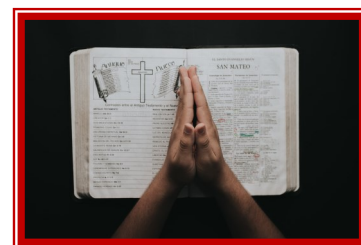
This week, we pray for each other as we continue to live into God's calling...

St. John's UCC, Denver

Dover UCC, Dover

Salem UCC, Dover

Mt. Olivet UCC, East Berlin



came, but it took years to hear and embrace the blessings. The limp remains.

I found through the years that superficial understandings of being a follower of Jesus are prevalent in our society. This especially pertains to pastors. I've heard people say that I should be close to God and in a state of blessed union because I am clergy. That doubts should not touch me, and I have a 'special relationship' with God that somehow precludes any anger, bewilderment, or fear. That I wouldn't wrestle with my Creator because I had overcome all that. Nothing could be further from the truth.

As a disciple who follows Jesus to the cross (not always very well), I must engage with all aspects of human and natural reality. I must pay close attention to that which hurts, maims, and destroys as well as that which amazes, inspires, and blesses. I believe as active, imperfect disciples we must dive deeply into the mysterious, paradoxical, contradictory, and liminal spaces where wrestling matches are often held. Places where struggles with God and reality may break apart our world as we know it. In time, our wrestling can bring us to a limping yet authentic place that knows how blessings arise out of what seemed endless struggle. And like Jacob, we may even say, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved."

Peace,

Carrie

Rev. Dr. Carrie Call

Conference Minister

Penn Central Conference

Congratulations!

Three PCC churches have received Kit Matching Grants from Church World Services. We are proud of the work they are doing.

Redeemer's UCC, Littleton received a \$250 grant for 48 Hygiene Kits.

Emmanuel UCC, York received a \$250 grant for 5 Welcome Backpacks and 10 Menstrual Hygiene Kits.

New Hope UCC, Landisburg received a \$250 grant for 10 Emergency Cleanup Kits.

Thank you to Church World Services for partnering with our congregations!

We are also proud to announce that St. John's UCC, Boalsburg have collected funds through their VBS to purchase and send 92 solar powered Luci Lights to Ukraine for the relief efforts there. Those lights were shipped out last week.

The Virtual Choir is kicking off a third season of music! Between now and next summer they will record and deliver 5 new pieces which can be used by any of your churches! We're starting off with a Jazz-inspired anthem with social justice themes for the fall, and we'll do a Rutter Christmas Carol as well as other contemporary and traditional anthems.

If you'd like to join us to sing, or receive notice of the anthems as they come out (they are also in this newsletter) contact Julie Holm at bvfofmusic@gmail.com.

Looking ahead:

"Making All Things New"

General Synod 2023

"Making All Things New" will be the theme of the 34th biennial General Synod of the United Church of Christ, scheduled for June 30–July 4, 2023, in Indianapolis.

The General Synod of the United Church of Christ will get back to business a year from now. And it will do so in person.

After an all-virtual experience in 2021, the UCC's biennial national meeting will require all voting delegates to be in Indianapolis in 2023. That's according to the Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson, the associate general minister who serves as Synod administrator.

Delegates and visitors will meet June 30 through July 4 at the Indianapolis Convention Center.