PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE

A Message from PCC

March 20, 2024

Greetings friends and members of Penn Central!

I was in Saint Louis last week with our UCC Council of Health and Human Services Ministry team and their member organizations for the annual gathering. CHHSM Agencies serve multiple functions: the well-being of children, care of aging adults, health care organizations, and facilities for adults with mental health or developmental concerns. Most of these agencies see their work as directly related to, and a ministry of, the church that brought them into being. It was a powerful experience to be among nurses, facility directors, CEOs, activity directors, social workers, and chaplains - who all understand their daily work and the mission of their organization as expressions of collective faith, and in many cases personal faith as well. The overarching theme for our time together was Collaboration as a Gateway to Innovation. We heard repeatedly Ecclesiastes 4:9-10: "It is better to have a partner. Share the work, share the wealth. And if one falls down the other helps." (The Message)

One of the major takeaways for me on the very first day was a need for the Church to "get outside": outside of our history, outside of ourselves, outside of our models, outside of our buildings, outside of what we think we know about tomorrow. This "getting outside" was repeatedly set in the context of the story of Rev. Louis Nollau whose congregation of German immigrants in 1858 opened an orphanage for children of the cholera pandemics. A congregant told Rev. Nollau that "we don't have the money for that" to which Rev. Nollau thoughtfully replied, "But we have the children." The need was tremendous in that day and Every Child's Hope continues to serve an immense need among children and families in the greater St. Louis area today because "we have the children" and local congregations and donors continue to see the value of mission-first spending.

If you were to look outside, who are the "children" in your community? In what ways might you share yourselves in a greater mission of caring and changing

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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...

First Reformed Church UCC, Sunbury

Peace UCC, Denver

Paradise UCC, Milton

Trinity UCC, Turbotville



lives? Perhaps there you will see the unhoused or the food insecure, those needing community re-entry resources after prison, or those in recovery. Your congregation may not need to start an organization to serve the need - there is likely one already doing the work - but your partnership in that work would make a greater impact for changing lives.

One of the core values in the United Church of Christ is "changing lives." How does your congregation live out that core value in partnership with agencies outside yourself? (And in case you are curious, the other core values are "continuing testament" and "extravagant welcome.") No one congregation or agency can solve all the issues of our broken world, but our belief in who God is and how God acts in the world can beckon us to work for a world we believe is possible. So, the call this week is to look outside and find a partner, to "share the work, share the wealth."

Shalom,

Nora

Rev. Dr. Nora Foust

Associate Conference Minister

Penn Central Conference.

62nd Annual Meeting of the Penn Central Conference

For the first time, all four Pennsylvania conferences of the UCC will be gathering for a shared Annual Meeting on June 7-9, 2024 at The Penn Stater in State College, PA. We will have shared worship, workshops, meals and meetings as well as each conference's separate business meeting.

We will be joined by General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ, Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson, who will be preaching during closing worship on Sunday. All four conferences will be hosting a reception with her on Saturday evening as well. Register by clicking the Annual Meeting tab on pccucc.org

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/

Lay Leadership Convocation 2024

Saturday, April 6

This Year's Theme: Sharing Leadership

Keynote speaker: Dr. Sarah B. Drummond, Dean of Andover Newton Seminary at Yale Divinity School, New Haven, CT

8:30 - 9:00 am Registration and coffee

9:00 - 9:45 am Keynote Address by Dr. Sarah B. Drummond: "Shared Leadership"

10:00 - 11:15 am Workshops

12:45 –1:45 pm Lunch

1:45 – 3:00 pm Workshops

Workshops on various topics.

Learn more and register here.

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/lay-leadership-convocation-2024-tickets-803968149377