PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE

A Message from PCC

October 09, 2024

Greetings Penn Central members and friends,

"…It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." Mark 10:25

This week's lectionary Gospel passage is a well known one. We read the story of a rich man who asks Jesus "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus instructs him to sell all he has and give to the money to the poor. The man walks away dejected, for he had many possessions. It is a hallmark message of Jesus' ministry, appearing in three of the four gospels. Jesus spoke a lot about our relationship with money.

Sally Bowles sings in the musical Cabaret "money makes the world go round" and she's not wrong. We live in a society that requires money to merely exist and it is only human that we spend much of our time and energy earning, spending, and saving our pennies. The church is not immune – without money we cannot pay our pastor, pay our light bills, buy toilet paper… or pay a certain office manager's salary.

I sometimes fantasize about what I would do if I won the lottery. (The fact I never buy a lottery ticket need not interfere with this fantasy!) Having all that money would be a good thing, right? I could donate to my church and other important causes near and dear to me, pay off car loans for my family and probably a few other less altruistic purchases.

I do not think Jesus is saying merely having money is what keeps someone who is rich from entering the kingdom of God. After all, we have to eat! But how we pursue and hoard the almighty dollar? That is a different story.

Wealth building is an earthly goal, one that often requires us to prioritize the wrong things. Time that could be spent in building community and relationships is wasted on pursuing larger paychecks. Choices are made to increase the bottom

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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...

St. Paul UCC, Manheim

Canoe Camp Church of Christ, Mansfield

Zion's UCC, Marietta

St. John's UCC, Markelsville



line at the expense of our fellow human's wellbeing, not to mention the cost to our planet.

Later in this chapter Jesus says that the last shall be first and the first shall be last. The power structures and hierarchies of this world are the opposite of what they are in the kingdom of God. Those with money may have earthly power but serving our fellow humans is what God treasures. Our power comes from community building, from lifting each other up and working towards a common good.

When caring for the wellbeing of each other is our priority over amassing wealth, our bank accounts may look a little worse for the wear, but our faith will be stronger for it. Let love lead and we will see the kingdom of God.

Blessings,

Paul

C. Paul Keller

Office Manager

Penn Central Conference

UCC Appeal for Hurricane Helene Relief Efforts

I was in North Carolina for a funeral over the weekend as Helene unleashed rain and wind over our state's highest elevations. The amount of rain coming at the end of a week of wet weather was far more than any geography could handle. My parents and I waited a little more than 30 hours for a message from my sister and brother-in-law who live in the mountains of Ashe County. We heard. They were safe. No power, no water, no cell service - save the one lady with a magic phone in their small and devastated town.

I know many wait for that call still. Even as the clean-up begins for others.

One of the UCC outdoor ministry sites in the NC mountains, Johns River Valley Camp, where I camped, worked, and was married, sustained heavy damage. UCC churches are among the many from Florida to Tennessee who are assessing each of their situations.

The need is great and will last for some time to come. Buckets and hygiene kits, financial donations, mission teams and more. Check out this information from our national settings office of Global HOPE to see how you can help.

Donate here: https://support.ucc.org/hurricane-helene-relief

Or send a check to the PCC office,

Rev. Nora Foust

Associate Conference Minister

Penn Central Conference

Special Fall Meeting

November 9, 2024, 9:30AM - 12:30PM

The special fall meeting of the Penn Central Conference of the United Church of Christ will be held on Saturday, November 9, 2024, at 9:30 am EST. The meeting will be held in the sanctuary of St. Thomas United Church of Christ, 6490 Linglestown Rd., Harrisburg, PA 17112, and remote participation will be available via ZOOM. Associations within Penn Central Conference will also be hosting remote gatherings at official sites to allow participation in the meeting via ZOOM.

There are three items of business on the agenda for this meeting.

1. Presentation and approval of the proposed 2025 Penn Central Conference budget

2. Presentation and consideration for recognition of the STAR (Small Town and Rural Churches) Coalition as a self-created group within the United Church of Christ

3. Consideration and voting on a motion to create the Keystone Conference out of the four present Conferences of Penn Central, Penn Northeast, Penn West, and Pennsylvania Southeast.

Register here: https://penncentralconference.regfox.com/special-fall-meeting-2024 or go to pccucc.org and click on Annual Meeting