# The Keystone Connection

## A Message to the Conference

**March 24, 2026**

**Dear Keystone Members and Friends –**

We're at the beginning of Holy Week, with a multitude of services on the horizon. Pastors, musicians, and lay leaders alike have diligently planned and prepared them for weeks, if not months. Holy Week is deep in my bones, both as a follower of Jesus and a ministerial servant of the church, but that wasn't always the case. As a youth, I became a Christian and joined a low-church tradition that seemingly skipped over Palm Sunday and went straight to Easter. Perhaps we did pay attention to it, but the fact I can't remember whether we did is a clue that we probably didn't.

But now I can't imagine ignoring all the moments that form the spine of Holy Week, services like Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. There are reasons why most Christians repeat the narrative of Jesus' last week in worship services, and perhaps one is that it's a reminder that the resurrection of our Lord didn't just happen. It included stories of hope, hurt, betrayal, confusion, and death – and a deep despair in which hope itself seemed buried in the tomb alongside Jesus. Each of those moments is important to remember, to know deep in our bones, before we get to that good day, when we find out yet again that resurrection is the end of all the stories that God writes, and God writes them all. On behalf of the staff of the Conference, we wish you a Holy week, and a day full of joy on Easter morn'.

**Rev. Kevin McLemore**

**Transitional Regional Conference Minister - Region 1**

**Keystone Conference UCC**

**At the Keystone Conference Transitional Board Meeting on March 23, 2026, the following items were discussed:**

1. The Board Reviewed a number of the insights that we gained from our January planning retreat and testing out our planning process by developing goals for the People of the Table.

2. The Budget and Finance Committee reported that funds from the historic Pennsylvania Southeast Conference have been transferred to Keystone. The remaining three Conference are engaged in a similar process.

3. The Governance Committee is finalizing a series of additions and amendments to the Bylaws that will be acted on at our Annual Meeting in June.

4. The Transitional Regional Conference Ministers shared report about their various activities. Nora, Kevin and David reported on their pastoral and spiritual work, administrative leadership, Congregation and Association Support, Leadership Development, and Representational Duties. The Board noted that all three are have been present at many different places and events. Thank you Nora, Kevin and David.

**Rev. Dr. David DeRemer**

**Board Moderator**

**Keystone Conference**

**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. Keep checking in at hcspiritcamp.org for the upcoming brochure and registration links

**Ideas for Earth Month from Keystone Climate Justice Team:**

For Earth Month encourage your members to join the fourth annual Earth Summit on April 25, 1:00pm - 3:30pm. The theme this year is "A Future with Hope" (Jeremiah 29:11). To ground and inspire us as people of faith in difficult times, the Jim Antal Keynote Address will be delivered by the Rev. Dr. Kenneth Samuel, a renowned advocate and organizer for justice who serves as the pastor of Victory for the World Church in Decatur, Georgia. Register by going to **ucc.org/event/2026-earth-summit/**