



PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE



Empowering churches to proclaim the reconciling love of Christ.

A Message from PCC

Dear Members & Friends of Penn Central Conference,

*I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you.
(Philippians 1:3-4 NRSV)*

Happy New Year and Happy Epiphany to all. I chose the scripture verses above because I want to say a heart-filled thank you for your prayers, cards, and messages to me around my recent back surgery. I am still in recovery mode (e.g. not driving) but I am making progress. Due to the damage of my nerves, it will take time for all pain to dissipate. So, as I have said to several people, I am perpetually practicing patience! Your love and prayers felt very real to me as a comfort surrounding me. Thank you, thank you. I look forward to resuming my yoga and hiking as soon as possible!

Once again, we enter a new year with various hopes, fears, expectations, and wonderings. January is named after the Roman God Janus, who resided over doorways and beginnings. I have never thought of January as a doorway, per se, but I admit I like the image. All around me I have friends and family who are walking through the doors of new habits or promises or resolutions. I used to be one of them, a great maker-of-resolutions who marched into the new year thrusting a list in front of me of all that would be accomplished. Now I approach the new year as someone who peeks around the doorway with trepidation, not quite sure what will be on the other side.

My wariness at the threshold comes from two years of anxiety and the yo-yo Covid experience of safe-not-safe -sortof-safe. My wariness, however, has grown thin. I am tired of the push and pull of anxiety and grief. I do not want my life defined by grief, anxiety-

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Outdoor Ministries

"[Every]Body Of Christ" Youth/Confirmation Retreat

March 18-20 at Camp Nawakwa, located near Gettysburg. The weekend will begin at 7:00 on Friday evening and end with a closing program at 10:00 on Sunday morning. Cost is \$100 for 2 nights of lodging and 4 meals (3 on Saturday and breakfast on Sunday)

CHICKEN & WAFFLES at Nawakwa

Sunday, January 16 from Noon-2:00 p.m. Spend a Sunday at camp with a delicious home-made chicken and waffles meal. Bring your sleds if there's snow! There is no cost for this meal, but a free will offering will be taken.

WINTER FUN DAYS at Kirchenwald

Sundays, January 16 and February 20 from 1:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. Bring your family or youth group and enjoy an afternoon on Kirchenwald's award-winning toboggan run, ice-skating on the lake, or drinking hot chocolate in the lodge.

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 (Gowen City) UCC, Shamokin

Faith UCC, Grantville

Grace UCC, Greencastle

Emmanuel UCC, Hanover

Message from the Conference cont'

ty, or fear – and yet it seems to be. I confess that I struggle with this.

However, these past two years have also made an unexpected impression on my theological life. I have come to think and pray about God's providence more than at any other time in my life. Chapter six of Matthew holds words that bear repeating in these days of anxious existence: "And which of you, by being anxious can add a single hour to your span of life?" When I pray this question, "And how can I, by being anxious, add a single hour to my life?" I find some relief. I am reminded that my anxiety does not actually create new life. It is born out of fear, which closes off life-giving energy. It can only be countered with love.

At this doorway of 2022, I choose to invite love into my spiritual house to dwell. Anxiety and grief are already in the room with me. They will remain. Love, however, needs more space. I can open that space with prayer. When I actively pray to be reminded that God oversees all, I can find the wherewithal to come out of the corner and cross over the various thresholds and walk through the various doorways that appear.

I will never be one of those who can abolish anxiety by means of my faith. And I will not allow that truth to stoke spiritual guilt. Instead, I will remind myself that God owns the house in which I live, along with all the doorways I may ever approach. That practice of remembering God's providence diminishes fear and allows more room for love. It also grants me the strength to live alongside of anxiety and grief while not allowing them to claim ownership.

**Peace,
Carrie**

Rev. Dr. Carrie Call
Conference Minister
Penn Central Conference



Wider Church

The Virtual Choir is back!

The Virtual Choir season debuts with G. F. Handel's "And the Glory of the Lord." The piece is the first chorus in Handel's masterwork, Messiah. The text, Isaiah 40:5, promises the presence of God's glory to all of humanity. Check out our YouTube channel for the newest videos.

Our next song will be Mendelssohn's "How Lovely Are the Messengers." If you are interested in joining us, contact Julie Holm at bvfofmusic@gmail.com. Don't worry if you don't know the technology; Julie will help everyone be part of this project!

Contact us!

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