



PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE



Empowering churches to proclaim the reconciling love of Christ.

A Message from PCC

December 4, 2019

Dear friends of Penn Central Conference,

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory." (Matthew 25:31)

Ask people to describe the days between Thanksgiving and Christmas and you will likely hear a long list. In American society we experience a dizzying combination of excessive consumption, astonishing generosity, joyful family reunions, Blue Christmas grief and sadness, cyber sales, cookies of every kind, new movie releases, family arguments, Rudolf and Charlie Brown, Advent wreaths, spiked eggnog, and more. Our multiple screens and media outlets multiply the images, songs, and pleas of the season. The in-between days have become a time of tension between the secular demands of the "holiday shopping season" and the religious preparation of Advent.

What a contrast to what my Puritan ancestors would have known at this time of year. They didn't celebrate Christmas, and only some calendars of the time would include the Feast Day of Christ's birth on the 25th of December. Further back, during the Middle Ages, Advent was known as a Lenten season in which believers prepared for the second coming of Christ. Our lectionary readings for early Advent reflect this, with a focus on the end times and apocalyptic visions of Jesus as the returning judge. The modern understanding of Christmas - with a focus on the nativity in particular - is relatively recent.

The emphasis on the nativity at this time of year is easy for us. There is, after all, such great music and art depicting the baby Jesus in his mother's arms, surrounded by soft-eyed cattle, don-

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Hartman Center

Upcoming Retreats:

Men's Retreat: Seasons of a Man's Life Friday, January 17, 2020 at 7PM - Sunday January 19, 2020 at 1PM register online

The PCC Confirmation Retreat will be held March 27 - 29, 2020 at Hartman Center. This weekend is always a great opportunity for our confirmands to explore "Being The Church" and to connect with other youth.

Penn Central Conference is excited to announce the hiring of our new Coordinator for Camps and Retreats - Zoë D'heedene! Please join us in welcoming her to the team!

"Greetings members of the Penn Central Conference! My name is Zoë D'heedene and I am thrilled to announce that I will be joining the staff of the PCC in the role of Coordinator of Camps and Retreats. I am in the last stretch of my seminary education, am a member in discernment of the York Association, and a proud member of Dover UCC. I have been blessed to experience some of the wonderful variety our conference has to offer throughout my life as a youth and one new to ministry. Before even officially beginning in this role, I have felt the tremendous support of our conference and the passion surrounding our outdoor ministries program. I look forward to working with all of you to see what God has in store. Blessings and Shalom!"

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 UCC, West Milton

St. Peter's UCC, Lewisburg

New Covenant UCC, Williamsport

Willow Street UCC, Willow Street

Message from the Conference cont'

keys and sheep. The wise men add royalty and exoticism to the scene. The angels and shepherds watch over the stable and bring praise to the newborn king. Our emotions are stirred when we hear "O Holy Night" and when we light our candles and sing "Silent Night" together.

Perhaps my Puritan ancestors are to blame, but I confess that I'm drawn to the practice of Advent as a Lenten season as well. There is something challenging in that idea. Something that feels like spiritual house-cleaning. A time of preparation and self-examination. A time of provocative scripture that awakens the soul. As the year comes to a close I need the penitential reflection time and the humbling apocalyptic visions. I need to be reminded that Jesus is not only my savior-as-a-baby, but also my judge. I want to hear John the Baptist calling me to repent and to bear fruit worthy of repentance. As the year draws to a close, I want to be reminded of the demands of my discipleship and pushed to examine myself. Not only whether I have enough wrapping paper, but instead, is my soul truly prepared for the coming of the king?

Peace,
Carrie

For all the sacrifices that clergy and lay church workers have made in our congregations, over 100 years ago the Pension Boards of the United Church of Christ created the **Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross** and the Emergency Fund, to help support them in retirement and during times of emergent need. Watch for more info soon!

December 8, 4:00PM

A Thrill of Hope, the Weary World Rejoices

*Santee Chapel, Lancaster Theological Seminary
555 W James St, Lancaster, PA 17603*

Get your Christmas spirit flowing and feet tapping with a heart-warming holiday program of music for voice, organ, piano and Celtic harp. Presented by Rev. Scott Siciliano, pastor, composer, musician and Seminary grad known for his angelic voice and musical versatility.

Upcoming Events

December 14, 6:00PM—8:00PM

Live Nativity

*First UCC Middleburg
8671 Route 522, Middleburg, PA 17842*

Check out other upcoming events on our website:

<https://pccucc.org/calendar/>

Read our full weekly eNews:

<https://pccucc.org/enews-archive/>

Sign up for our weekly eNews:

Link at bottom of any page on www.pccucc.org

Don't forget to choose Penn Central Conference of the United Church of Christ as your AmazonSmile recipient before you begin your holiday shopping!



Contact us!

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