The Keystone Connection

A Message to the Conference

April 14, 2026

Siblings in Christ,

The story of the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–30) meets us at a tender intersection of grief and hope. Two disciples walk together, carrying the weight of what has been lost. Their expectations have crumbled and their future feels uncertain. But still this is exactly where the risen Christ comes to journey alongside them.

Keystone members, we, too, find ourselves on a road. We have made it through our first quarter since our 4 became one. We are living in both the promise and the pain of this new journey. I have been in small groups and quiet conversations, where there is real grief over familiar patterns, cherished identities, and ways of being church that have shaped us for so long. This lament is ok as long as we can commit and continue the journey together. Our grief is a sign of love and like the disciples, we name what has been lost because it mattered.

But the Emmaus story reminds us that loss is not the end of the journey. Jesus comes alongside the disciples even when they do not recognize him. He listens. He interprets. He walks with them. And then, at the table, in the breaking of the bread, their eyes are opened. What felt like an ending becomes a beginning.

So it is with us. Even as we grieve, Christ is present—guiding, teaching, and gently revealing a new future. Our shared mission to be people of the table is not accidental; it is deeply rooted in this resurrection story. At Emmaus, Jesus feeds spiritual hunger. In our communities, we are called to do the same—meeting both physical and spiritual need with compassion and abundance.

Our 50 Days of Easter initiative invites us to live this out in tangible ways. Each meal shared, each donation offered, each act of care becomes a sign of resurrection life. As we track and measure this impact, we are not simply counting numbers; we are bearing witness to the ways Christ is made known in the breaking of bread across our conference.

We may not yet see the full picture of what we are becoming together. The road may still feel uncertain. But Emmaus assures us that Christ is already among us—especially when we gather at the table, especially when we serve one another.

And perhaps, like those first disciples, we will come to say: "Were not our hearts burning within us?"—even here, even now, as we walk this road together.

In hope and companionship on the journey,

Rev. Dr. Nora Foust

Regional Conference Minister (2)

Keystone Conference UCC

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.

50 Days of Easter Food Challenge

A People of the Table Mission Project for Keystone Conference's 1st Annual Meeting

The Challenge: Churches across the Conference are challenged to donate non-perishable food to a local food bank between Easter (04/05/2026) and Pentecost (05/24/2026) and to report the quantities of their donations.

Each church will report its totals (by category) via a web link, and the Conference-wide total will be revealed at the 1st Annual Meeting, June 5–7, 2026. Using categories such as canned fruits and vegetables, cereal, pasta and rice, toiletries, and more will provide an easy-to-visualize picture of the breadth of donations.

Learn more at **keystoneucc.org/people-of-the-table/**

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. Registration is now open—check hcspiritcamp.org for more info and registration.