PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE

A Message from PCC

July 10, 2024

Greetings Penn Central members and friends,

Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So, he began teaching them many things. Mark 6:31-34

For years I have longed to have a greenhouse built on my property. This is a place where I can sink my hands into the soil, plant various seeds and watch them bloom into an abundance of hearty fruits and vegetables. This year my husband and two sons helped to build a greenhouse for me to grow my various plants. It has become my sacred space, a place to pray, a place to sing and meditate on the Word. And at the same time, it has become a place to rest. This beautiful little greenhouse allows me to rejuvenate my mind, body and soul. What I've come to realize in my seventeen years of ministry is I like the disciples, fall into extreme busyness that sometimes halts me from caring for my own well-being. As a result, I am unable to properly care for others.

Last week if you follow the lectionary, the Gospel of Mark told us the story of how Jesus took his disciples to a deserted place to rest. They were so busy that they didn't even have time to share a meal. Upon their arrival, they were surprised to be greeted by a large crowd in need of prayer, miracles, and healing. Jesus, immediately showed them compassion, recognizing their needs and began to teach them. This leads me to ask the question: What happens to Christians when we become too busy to take time away or even sit down to eat together? We need moments to step back from our individual activities, even those done in the name of Jesus Christ, to reconnect as the body of Christ.

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Contact us!

PCC Office Staff

Rev. Dr. Carrie Call, PhD - *Conference Minister*
email: ccall@pccucc.org / Phone: 717-433-3196

Rev. Dr. Nora Driver Foust - *Associate Conference Minister*
email: nfoust@pccucc.org / Phone: 717-433-2587

C. Paul Keller - *Office Manager*
email: pkeller@pccucc.org / Phone: 717-652-1560

Rev. Dwight Hein - *Facilitator for Clergy Care*

email: dhein@pccucc.org / Phone: 717-433-6306

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, Shamokin

Faith UCC, Grantville

Grace UCC, Greencastle

Emmanuel UCC, Hanover



This text interests me because I believe that this passage takes two avenues. The first is that we all need to rest. Rest allows us to be refreshed and be able to do our work more effectively. The second avenue that is simultaneously taken in this passage tells us as Christians that even if we feel the need to rest, if someone is in need of prayer, or hearing the Gospel, we are to honor their request and show them compassion. It is truly a balancing act for all Christians whether you are a minister or you are a lay person. And sometimes as a minister I find that my individual healing takes place when I am called to reach out to someone who is in need. Something happens in the time that I spend with the person and the time when I return home. There is an unexplained spiritual healing that rejuvenates my tired and weary bones.

So now I have this place that I call sacred in the form of a little greenhouse. Although I know that there is healing in sinking my hands into the rich soil and seeing the plants grow into abundance, I also know that when there is a need for the Gospel to be shared, that I am to mirror the actions of Jesus Christ and to go into the world and spread the seeds of the Gospel just like I spread the seeds in my greenhouse. In both cases, it is a spiritual blessing.

Peace,

Ronnette

Rev. Dr. Ronnette Comfort-Butler

Penn Central Conference

Explore our German roots! The PCC-EKiR partnership with the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland, Germany, is looking for leaders for their next generation project to participate in two ecumenical church meetings, one in the fall, in Wisconsin, and one in the spring in Wuppertal, Germany. Clergy and involved laypeople in age up to the early 40s are sought. The partnership committee has a commitment to pursuing grants and other funding for your travel expenses. We prefer people who can commit to both meetings, but will consider people who can only commit to one. This is a significant ecumenical continuing education and relationship opportunity! For more information contact Julie Holm at julie@bvfof.org!

UCC Wellness Ministries Handbook for Visitation

Are you visiting a person or writing a note on behalf of the church? Aren't sure what to do or say to this person?

This handbook furnishes information to guide you in each encounter and provides scripture passages, prayers, and blessings you can easily use.

This Handbook replaces the now-retired Called to Care Pocket Handbook for Caregivers.

The Handbook will be available from the UCC Resources Store by early fall.