



PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE



Empowering churches to proclaim the reconciling love of Christ.

A Message from PCC

May 20, 2020

Dear Friends of Penn Central Conference -

"Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong." 1 Corinthians 16:13 (NIV)

I chose this little verse from one of the letters written by Paul to the church people of Corinth because I believe that we might just need to hear this, right now. We have been in isolation for several weeks. Isolated from the normalcies of life. Many of us are finding that we are experiencing that liminal space as many of us transition from red to yellow in Pennsylvania counties. We are wondering when we will be able to return to church. We are excited to have things return to normal. However, as we are contemplating this return to our places of worship, we also may be having some anxiety about how we are going to do this and do it safely.

There is no doubt that we are all ready to get out of isolation and back to our regular routines and schedules. However, when we find ourselves on the cusp of doing something quickly to fulfil our longing to return to "normal", we also have to think about the repercussions of our actions. It is our responsibility as a church, and it is our responsibility as pastors to think things through from every angle when it comes to returning to church during the Covid 19 pandemic.

To be perfectly blunt, these decisions require a great amount of responsibility and may cause us to quickly resort to relying on our own devices to "make it happen and make it happen quickly."

This is nothing new obviously for human beings and for churches because we see that Paul felt the need to remind the churches and their people in Corinth that they need to be on guard and to stand firm in the faith. This would require them and in extension us) to be courageous and to be strong because we are not in easy

times. There are a number of particularly important decisions to be made. We can even say that result of our decisions could cost us dearly.

I bring this subject to the forefront because I know that it is on every pastor's mind and also on the minds of our congregations. I also know that sometimes moving at a slow steady pace is not looked at as necessary, especially in Pennsylvania where community and gatherings are particularly important connections. Pennsylvania is also a place where we are expected to "pull ourselves up by the bootstraps" and get on with it. This is part of our DNA. And yet, even with this PA mentality, we need more than ever to hear the voice of Paul reminding us that we need to be on our guard and stand firm within our faith. Being on guard means being careful. This will take great courage and we will have to be strong. This is a practice that is valuable to all of us, especially right now when there is so much uncertainty and anxiety caused by the unknown.

Rev. Dr. Ronnette Comfort-Butler

Facilitator of Care to Clergy & Clergy Families

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...

Saint John's UCC, Lewisburg

Trinity UCC, Lewistown

Saint Luke's UCC, Lititz

Faith UCC, Littlestown