PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE

A Message from PCC

October 30, 2024

Greetings from the Board of Directors of the Penn Central Conference,

"Ringed by this cloud of witnesses divine, we feebly struggle, they in glory shine; yet in your love our faithful lives entwine. Alleluia! Alleluia!"

Vs. 4 of "For the All the Saints" hymn by William W. How, 1864

If you're ever in the position of needing to write a nomination reference for someone for sainthood, I recommend reading Adomnan of Iona's, "Life of St. Columba." Adomnan was a seventh century Irish priest who eventually became the ninth abbot of Iona Monastery on a small island in present day northwest Scotland. He was also a distant relative of Columba who founded Iona about a hundred years before the book was written.

The book itself depicts Columba as a wise abbot, who like Christ, was capable of turning water into wine, controlling sea storms for travelers coming to the abbey, and even raising the dead. After a few pages into reading the book, one realizes it is quite evident the whole point of the book was to lift up Columba as a person of incredible gifts and a person who was clearly a saint, in a time some historians now call "the Age of Saints." So, again, this book will help you see a format for making a person sound perfect and deserving of every accolade, even sainthood.

However, while reading it, I was left wondering, what about Columba's flaws? He is at times shown as being impatient or even getting agitated. But I wanted to know if he ever snapped at someone because he was hangry? Or did he ever get tired of the 24 hours of darkness in the northwest Scottish winters? Or did he ever decided to skip morning prayers, like I justify skipping exercising, because it felt better to stay under warm blankets for another half hour? I want to know he "feebly struggled" some days like me.

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Contact us!

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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. John's UCC, Mifflinburg

Trinity UCC, Millersburg

Mount Bethel UCC, Mill Hall

Trinity Reformed UCC, Mountville



I'm bringing this up because later this week we'll celebrate All Saints Day or perhaps All Saints Sunday in our congregations. If your practice on this day is anything like mine, I'm going to remember people who will never be nominated for sainthood, because they were their own unique blend of saint and sinner, like all of us. And I'll do like most of us do with loved ones and friends who have passed, I'll remember their best qualities, their best days, and the way they made my life or my community livelier. I'll also remember how they were forgiven for the unsaintly stuff, just like I hope I am being forgiven for mine. They weren't perfect and may have hurt me or others, but again if I am honest, that is like my life, too.

But knowing that God's love for them has found completion in their now being part of the divine cloud of witnesses allows me to stand in gratitude for their part in my life and faith journey. And who knows, maybe someday someone will write down a memory of me and make me sound way better than my worst day, and they'll remember that I was loved unconditionally by God, just like "all the saints who from their labors rest."

Rev. Dwight Hein

Facilitator of Clergy Care

Penn Central ConferencePenn Central Conference

The United Church of Christ has established the Hurricane Helene Recovery Appeal and the Hurricanes 2024 Appeal.

https://support.ucc.org/hurricane-helene-relief

Your support for these appeals will ensure that communities are supported and accompanied for years as they rebuild. You can donate through your local church, with your gifts going through the Conference to the Appeal. Gifts can be made through PCC by clicking "DONATE" on pccucc.org. Under "Directed Gifts" choose "Disaster Relief" and notate "Hurricane Relief". And you can always mail a check to the PCC offices with the same notation.

Special Fall Meeting

November 9, 2024, 9:30AM - 12:30PM

The special fall meeting of the Penn Central Conference of the United Church of Christ will be held on Saturday, November 9, 2024, at 9:30 am EST. The meeting will be held in the sanctuary of St. Thomas United Church of Christ, 6490 Linglestown Rd., Harrisburg, PA 17112, and remote participation will be available via ZOOM. Associations within Penn Central Conference will also be hosting remote gatherings at official sites to allow participation in the meeting via ZOOM.

There are three items of business on the agenda for this meeting.

1. Presentation and approval of the proposed 2025 Penn Central Conference budget

2. Presentation and consideration for recognition of the STAR (Small Town and Rural Churches) Coalition as a self-created group within the United Church of Christ

3. Consideration and voting on a motion to create the Keystone Conference out of the four present Conferences of Penn Central, Penn Northeast, Penn West, and Pennsylvania Southeast.

Register here: https://penncentralconference.regfox.com/special-fall-meeting-2024 or go to pccucc.org and click on Annual Meeting