PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE

A Message from PCC

May 15, 2024

Greetings friends and members of Penn Central,

"Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting." (Acts 2:2, NIV)

Pentecost Sunday is one day that we focus specifically on the Holy Spirit. And it's dramatic – a great wind, tongues of fire, speaking in many languages and yet understanding one another – the event is pivotal to the birth of the Jesus movement and is considered by many to be the 'Birthday of the Church'.

Despite Pentecost's arrival every year, the Holy Spirit is deeply mysterious to me. I have been to many, many worship services in which we ask for the Spirit's presence among us or assume it is already there. But how do we know? What does it look like? Recently I have been reflecting on my own experiences of the presence of the Spirit. To be honest, they do not happen as often as one might assume for a 'church lady.' But now I see some things they all have in common.

For one, the presence of the Holy Spirit is more than an emotional rush. Emotions have a role, but if the experience is only based on emotions, then it is no different than other events (e.g. concerts, theater) that provoke great emotions. I have been deeply moved emotionally by worship. But when the Spirit is present, it feels wholly other. There is more than what I feel personally. There is a sense of pregnant silence, as if there is a presence in the room beyond me, beyond all of us.

Also, every time has been a surprise. For me the Spirit emerges by its own freedom at unexpected times. The Spirit moves where it chooses, not where we want it to be or where we may ask it to come. I have felt the sudden presence of the Holy on a zoom prayer meeting, at an ecclesiastical council, during communion with strangers. All were times I did not expect a particularly special

Continues on back

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. John's UCC, Bellefonte

Peace UCC, Berrysburg

Zion UCC, Blain

St. John's UCC, Boalsburg



experience and yet was caught off guard by a sudden sense of the other, and I was shifted out of myself – I was de-centered, and the presence of the Holy became the center. Usually, it only lasts for moments and leaves me with no words.

The Spirit moves outside of us. It is more than us. And for me, it moves beyond the church walls – my experiences of the Holy have surprised me in wild mountain places and standing in front of artwork too.

And how do we know that it has been present? Because the gifts of the Spirit emerge where it has passed. I have seen divided people moved to reconciliation, others shifted toward gentleness from wrath, and yet others from rejection to compassion. The Spirit's presence changes those who are there. Greater humility emerges as we are de-centered. I am reminded of how small I am in the presence of the creating force of the universe.

Where and how does the Spirit move around and within you?

Peace,

Carrie

Rev. Dr. Carrie Call

Conference Minister

Penn Central Conference

Strengthen The Church offering is May 19, 2024

The Strengthen the Church Offering supports congregations and initiatives that help us live into the United Church of Christ's "big tent" vision. Funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and renewal initiatives in existing congregations. Your conference and the national ministries work together to use these funds for projects that matter now and for the future of our movement.

Half of your Strengthen The Church offering stays right here in Penn Central Conference. Your donations fund our Innovation Grants, which have helped churches upgrade technology, fund food banks, start LGTBQ youth centers, install new signage and many other projects. Innovation Grant application period opens July 1st.

62nd Annual Meeting of the Penn Central Conference

For the first time, all four Pennsylvania conferences of the UCC will be gathering for a shared Annual Meeting on June 7-9, 2024 at The Penn Stater in State College, PA. We will have shared worship, workshops, meals and meetings as well as each conference's separate business meeting.

We will be joined by General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ, Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson, who will be preaching during closing worship on Sunday. All four conferences will be hosting a reception with her on Saturday evening as well. Register by clicking the Annual Meeting tab on pccucc.org

Registration is now open for **HC Spirit camp at Hartman Center Campground and Retreat Center** - Sunday, July 28th through Saturday, August 3rd, 2024.

https://penncentralconference.regfox.com/hartman-homecoming-week-2024

Camp makes a great Christmas gift. Check out the summer options from our partners at Lutheran Camping Corporation's Kirchenwald (and Nawakwa)

https://www.lutherancamping.org/summer-camp/youth-summer-programs/