PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE

A Message from PCC

September 27, 2023

Members and Friends of Penn Central Conference,

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, but leave room for God's own wrath, for it is written: "it is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord". Romans 12: 9-21

Reading this passage raises a recurring question with each clause, "Are there not exceptions, that is persons for whom we do not need to extend the hospitality described in the text?" Seriously, could not any one of us easily compile a list of people with whom we have grievances and who, in our thinking, deserve our wrath? Yet, in reading the text again, there are no loopholes for allowing us to at least harbor a grudge, let alone seek revenge. Or at least publicly bad mouth the offender. Still, we might protest and say, "Well what about...?" And then proceed to recite a litany of offenses that or those other persons have committed against us.

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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...

Trinity UCC, Glen Rock

St. Paul's (Gowen City) UCC, Shamokin

Faith UCC, Grantville

Grace) UCC, Greencastle



Listening to the news, gathering with friends or colleagues, thinking about relationships that have soured, any of these circumstances can recall serious grievances we have experienced. Each raises the specter of temptation to wish or even extend vengeful action to offender(s). But there in front of us, like a big stop sign, are Paul's words exhorting just the opposite.

In verse 17 the Apostle states, "Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone." I take this as an instruction to seek corrective solutions in holding persons accountable for wrongdoing. Reconciliation and restoration are to be the goal. Again, we hear protests of, "That is too much to expect of me, you do not understand how badly I was hurt."

No, we may not have experienced the same type or level of injury and we do well to allow the expression of grief and offer comfort and support. Yet, we also must seek for ourselves, as well as any we counsel, to find means for resolving the pain and not allowing it to take root in our mind and spirit. A daunting task assuredly, but it is what the Apostle encourages.

I recall that following the conviction and sentence of death for Timothy McVeigh (Oklahoma City Bombing terrorist) a father of one of the victims was asked how he felt about the death sentence. The man answered, "I oppose it, I want McVeigh to live long enough for me to learn how to forgive him." Despite the father's pain and anger, he found the grace to offer such words of hope for reconciliation.

There are those who might state sarcastically, "Paul is a good one to offer such advice." The truth is very few of any among us could measure up to such a statement. Still, the aspiration of leaning to live as this passage challenges is a significant aspect of the way of discipleship.

Rick

Rev. Rick Luciotti

Clergy Care

Penn Central Conference

Register for the following at https://pccucc.org/register-for-an-event/

PCC Fall Budget Meeting

November 11, 2023 9:30 AM

This year's Annual Meeting included a vote for the Penn Central Conference to have a Budget Meeting in the fall. Each authorized minister is a voting member and each church is allowed two delegates to vote. These can be, but do not have to be, the same delegates as went to Annual Meeting. We do still need to reach quorum.

This meeting will be on Zoom only, and will include a budget presentation and vote. We anticipate it to take no more than 60 - 90 minutes.

Synod Seconds – A Keystone-wide Conversation

Join conference staff and delegates from across the keystone state as we explore implementation of General Synod Resolutions and looks at snap-shots of wider-church life. We'll be starting with 3 zooms this fall, September 11, October 16, and November 13 from 6:30-8 pm. All are welcome. Please register.

Choose from three in person and one Zoom Town Hall to learn more about the **Keystone Project**, the current working group's assessments and how they are visioning "Together we are stronger: the Keystone Conference."

October 11, 6:30PM; St. John's UCC, Lewisburg (in-person only)

October 18, 6:30PM - St. Paul's UCC, Mechanicsburg (in-person only)

November 1, 6:30PM - Zoom Only

November 14, 6:30PM - Quentin UCC, Quentin (in-person only)