



PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE



A Message from PCC

May 3, 2023

Greetings members and friends of Penn Central Conference,

“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.” (Psalm 23)

Many of us love the 23rd psalm. Written about 1000 BCE, the psalm offers assurance of God's presence. Most are familiar with the psalm from funerals and memorial services and associate it with rituals around death and dying. However, in the Christian tradition it did not gain 'fame' as a funeral psalm until the 20th century and the advent of television and movies which started using the psalm in funeral scenes. The association took off from there.

However, Psalm 23 is about life, hope, and faith as well. I saw that on display while leading a retreat for clergy in the Florida Conference this past week. We used the 23rd psalm for reflection about ourselves and our life experiences. Questions we explored included, “Who/what are your enemies?”, “What does the valley of the shadow of death look like for you?”, “If God laid a table for you in the presence of your enemies, what would be on it?” and “How do we know when our souls are ‘restored’?” Participants spent time reflecting on the questions and sharing insights.

The conversations became deep and meaningful very quickly. We learned that “enemies” can be interpreted in various ways – from those people we feel might be trying to do us harm to aspects of our own personalities that work against us. “The valley of the shadow of death” might mean grief around personal losses but may also refer to addiction or divorce. We saw that our interpretations were shaped by our own life experiences and sharing those facilitated

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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

Rev. Rick Luciotti - *Facilitator of Care to Clergy and Clergy Families*
email: rluciotti@gmail.com / Phone: 717-433-6306

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

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 UCC, Shrewsbury

St. Matthew (Coleman's) UCC, Gratz

Bethel UCC, Spring Grove

Mt. Zion UCC, Spring Grove



new perspectives for all of us. The stand-out terms in the psalm (particularly ‘enemies’) provided windows into our own histories, struggles, and healing.

The clergy engaged in psalm-writing of their own, which followed from a series of prompts I provided. The results were astonishing. Not only were several of them very beautiful, but they were all moving and deeply personal. I was reminded that engaging with scripture very intentionally can take us to places we would not go otherwise.

As part of my own interior work during the retreat I did a ‘remix’ of the 23rd Psalm. I shared this with participants and share it with you here.

Psalm 23 (Remix by C. Call)

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
I fear no evil.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
You make me lie down in green pastures;
You lead me beside still waters;
You lead me in right paths for your name's sake;
You restore my soul.

You anoint my head with oil;
Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
My cup overflows.

The Lord is my shepherd;
goodness and mercy shall follow me.
Surely, all the days of my life
I shall not want.

I look forward to an opportunity for PA clergy to engage in this kind of intentional study on a retreat. And I give thanks to Rev. John Vertigan, the Florida Conference Minister and my former boss in the Indiana-Kentucky Conference, who made this retreat possible.

Carrie

Rev. Dr. Carrie Call, Conference Minister
Penn Central Conference

"Renewing The Covenant We Share" PCC

61st Annual Meeting - June 9-10, 2023 at Double-Tree Hotel in Willow Street (Lancaster)

Registration now open! <https://penncentralconference.regfox.com/penn-central-conference-annual-meeting-2023>

"Making All Things New" General Synod 2023

“Making All Things New” will be the theme of the 34th biennial General Synod of the United Church of Christ, scheduled for June 30–July 4, 2023, in Indianapolis.

Hartman Center Homecoming week

July 31 through August 5, 2023

We will be returning to Hartman Center Campground in Milroy, PA as guests. Camping experiences for all ages, including intergenerational camps.

2 night camps Monday, July 31 at 4PM through Wednesday, August 2 at 4PM

Getting Started - Grades 1 and 2 (\$125)

Intergenerational Camp (\$125)

3 night camps Wednesday, August 2 at 4PM through Saturday, August 5 at 11AM

Intergenerational Camp (\$190)

Camp of the Heart (\$250)

5 night camps Monday, 07/31/2023 at 4PM through Saturday, 08/05/2023 at 11AM

Elementary - Grades 3 - 5 (\$300)

Junior High - Grades 6 - 8 (\$300)

Senior High - Grades 9 - 12 plus (\$300)

Leadership - Grades 9 - 12 plus (\$300)

For more information, contact

Rev. Alice Rauch alirauch07@gmail.com (director) or

Rev. Amelia Price aashivers@gmail.com (registrar)

<https://penncentralconference.regfox.com/hartman-homecoming-week>