



# PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE



Empowering churches to proclaim the reconciling love of Christ.

## A Message from PCC

**August 25, 2021**

**Dear friends and members of Penn Central Conference,**

*"For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received..."*

(I Corinthians 15:3a)

Earlier this month I drove to Lebanon to sign papers. The papers were the closing documents on the sale of St. John's UCC in Lebanon to the Rock of Salvation Pentecostal church. For those of you who don't know, St. John's church was built in 1859 in Lebanon and was the church of Rev. Henry Harbaugh, one of the German Reformed Church's most esteemed pastoral leaders. St. John's is big, beautiful, and historic. Filled with unique woodwork and glass mosaic windows, the entrance hall and sanctuary always drew comments and compliments.

I confess, I love this church. I love the building and the towers, the unique glass windows, the spiral staircases and the truly exceptional 19th century woodwork. Every time I visited I was overcome with a powerful sense of history. I loved the people in the congregation too – including two who were 5th generation descendants. There was a palpable sense of the history of faith in the building and among the people.

The congregation worked diligently to stay in the building (with the help of Rev. Dave Jones) yet eventually accepted that their ministry had come to an end. They voted to close, and the building came to Penn Central Conference. We considered a variety of possible uses and all were passed over, given significant HVAC needs. We listed the building for sale, received an offer, and accepted it.

When I went to sign the papers, I recognized an undercurrent of grief. I felt that a loss was happening and we – Penn Central and the UCC – were losing something precious. The history! The beauty! However, I was quickly humbled. Turns out the Holy Spirit was hovering

*Continues on back*

## Outdoor Ministries

**In partnership with Lutheran Camping Corporation**

### THE GROWING PROJECT

Volunteer for The Growing Project through October! This project reclaims a portion of the acreage for farming. The crops harvested are donated to assist those in need in Lancaster County.

Learn more here: <https://pccucc.org/outdoor-ministry/>



## 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...

**Peace UCC, Denver**

**Paradise UCC, Milton**

**Trinity UCC, Turbotville**

**Emmanuel Union UCC, Centre Hall**



## Message from the Conference cont'

there in the room of the Lebanon Land Transfer Company. The moment I met the new owners I was suffused with a quiet joy. Our eyes met and my heart shifted. I was moved and humbled.

I remembered suddenly that we do not own the church. Any church. Ultimately all churches belong to God – both the buildings and the people. Our job is to steward them faithfully, for as long as we are able, living out the mission of the Gospel.

In the case of St. John's, the building passed on to another church who will love it and steward it. I have no doubt that the sanctuary will ring with music, praise, and preaching...and it will be filled with the Holy Spirit. I know this because Rock of Salvation is part of the Body of Christ. Their theology may differ from ours. Their worship may differ too. Yet we are joined in a long line of faith that has been handed down through history, cared for and curated by believers before us. The congregations (and the church buildings) of St. John's UCC and Rock of Salvation church both stand in the stream of history. Our task is to preach and teach the gospel and hand on the faith to those downstream. Sometimes that also means letting go and handing over, remembering that only God truly owns the church.

**Peace,  
Carrie**

Rev. Dr. Carrie  
Call  
Conference  
Minister



## Church Events

### 2021 Old Zion Reformed Church Anniversary Service

Theme: "Don't Join the Cloister"  
Sunday, September 12<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m.

The United Church of Christ is issuing a call to action to help the people of Haiti. A massive 7.2 earthquake on Saturday has killed nearly 1,300 people. Search and rescue efforts are expected to be hampered by Tropical Depression Grace, which came ashore on Monday.

To donate to this appeal, go to [www.ucc.org/giving/donate-now/general-donation/](http://www.ucc.org/giving/donate-now/general-donation/) and designate the gift to "Haiti Appeal." One can also mail a check made payable to the United Church of Christ, to 700 Prospect Ave., Cleveland, OH 44115. Please be sure to note "Haiti Appeal" on your check in the memo section, or in an attached letter.

## General Synod

Our Synod delegates met online and in person in July. One of the tasks of the delegates was voting on resolutions. Over the next few weeks, many of your delegates will share a brief overview of resolutions, the action taken at Synod, and if available, some resources for learning more. Some of them may inspire you to learn more! Catch them in the online eNews, to subscribe email [pkeller@pccucc.org](mailto:pkeller@pccucc.org) or at [pccucc.org/enews-archive](http://pccucc.org/enews-archive)

## Contact us!

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