PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE

A Message from PCC

December 18, 2024

Greeting Penn Central Conference friends and members,

"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

for God has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.

Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed." (Lk 1:46b-48 NRSUE)

Every Advent I spend intentional time pondering the ways that Jesus may be coming or calling anew in my life, ministry, and community. I work to open myself to hearing that call on my way of living. At the Authorizing Ministry for the 21st Century Conference (AM21*) last week, there were several profound and clear moments for me, both personally and professionally, of Jesus' coming and calling again in this day.

The opening worship included the NY Conference Minister, Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams, leading us in singing the old hymn "I Surrender All." This moving beginning set the intention in my heart for what the week's workshops and plenaries might be asking me to surrender to Jesus in this now, ***and not yet,*** season of Advent. In a small group activity where we were charged with pondering our purpose, one voice mused, "we are not called to connect to a ***cause***, we are called to connect to ***Christ***." Yes! Indeed Jesus is the vine and we, his beloveds, are the intricately woven, interdependent, and connected branches. (Jn 15:5) I immediately began to wonder how recentering my connection to Christ might push me to surrender some of my causes and pursuits so that Jesus could bring into clearer focus His calling.

Mary's Magnificat (*Lk 1:46b-55*) is our scripture passage this week in the Revised Common Lectionary. Each time when reading this, I can't help but think about the ways that Mary was connected to the True Vine – a connection that led to her choosing, her trusting, her willingness to do hard things at great personal cost.

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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, Shamokin

Salem UCC, Coal Township

Grace UCC, Shippensburg

St. Matthew (Coleman's) UCC, Spring Glen



What if we as the Church in this season of Advent anticipated God connecting with us in a new way - a way never even thought of before – a call that asks us to give causes, agendas, time, talent, and maybe even money, from a deeper place, or possibly at greater personal cost? Focusing on our connection with the Holy One as we await Christ's in-breaking again can invite the intention of all our hearts to cry out, "All to Jesus, I surrender, all to Him I freely give; I will ever love and trust Him, in His presence daily live."

That is my prayer this season, that we might each and all surrender to Jesus' call upon our daily living. May it be so.

Blessed Advent and Merry Christmas!

Nora

*AM21 is the bi-annual conference for judicatory staff gathering the Conference Ministers, Associate Conference Ministers, team members of the Ministerial Excellence, Support, and Authorization (MESA) Team, and other national setting staffers, as well as some of our Ecumenical Partners for 3 days of workshops, worships, plenaries, and fellowship.

Prayer Request and Holiday Office Hours

Our Conference Minister, Rev. Dr. Carrie Call, will be on medical leave until mid-January as she recovers from cervical spine surgery on 12/17 fusing 3 vertebrae to relieve pain in her neck and upper back. Please contact the office (717-652-1560) if you need assistance during this time and Paul (pkeller@pccucc.org) or Nora (nfoust@pccucc.org) will get back to you.

Also of note, the office will be closed Christmas Eve through New Year's Day. Nora will check email and voicemails periodically during that time, but please text her if you have an emergent need.

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.

Rock and Roll With It

Hartman Center Winter Youth Retreat

We will be returning to Hartman Center Campground as guests.

5725 Old US Highway 322, Milroy, PA 17063

January 17-19, 2025

Grades 6 through College Grad (or age 22)

Meals and Lodging included

$150 after December 2, 2024

Use coupon code PCC2025 if you would like to use a Penn Central Conference Outdoor Ministries scholarship of 50% off your registration fees.

Register here: https://penncentralconference.regfox.com/rock-roll-with-it-youth-retreat-2025

Christmas Fund Offering is December 22, 2024

The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund is a Special Mission Offering that congregations have been supporting for over 100 years. The offering is administered through the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance, the charitable arm of the Pension Boards. Funds provide direct financial support to those who serve the church and are facing financial difficulties. Active and retired clergy, lay employees, and their surviving spouses may be eligible for the Supplementation of Small Annuities, Supplementation of Health Premiums, Emergency Grants, and/or Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks.

