



PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE



Empowering churches to proclaim the reconciling love of Christ.

A Message from PCC

January 29, 2020

Dear Friends of Penn Central Conference -

"Let us consider how to provoke one another to love...not neglecting to meet together...but encouraging one another." (Hebrews 10:24-25)

This past week at the Clergy Sabbath I facilitated a discussion about why it is that we might resist engaging in practices that would build a greater sense of balance in our lives. We have all talked about personal-professional balance and how hard it can be, but we don't often dig down into what actually makes it so difficult to achieve. It's easy to say that a lack of balance in one's life happens because "we don't have enough time" or because "the demands of the job are too much." However, we need to dig deeper.

One way to do this is to ask the question, "What are the voices in your head saying?" When I did this at the Sabbath event there was a tsunami of responses, all of which give some explanation as to why we push ourselves so hard. Consider these voices and how they affect our work ethic: "You're not good enough", "You have to prove yourself", "You're lazy", "You need to put in more hours", "You need to prove your holiness (or calling, or expertise, or perfection)", or "You need more people in the pews" and, ultimately, "You need to prove your worth".

When there are voices inside of us telling us that we are consistently on the edge of failure, we tend to push ourselves to prove that we are not failures, and thus the cycle continues. The striving may be reinforced when we meet with colleagues and we feel the slight edge of competition, or fear being judged, and we put our shop-window personas into place and refuse to be vulnerable with one another because it's too dangerous. We may be terribly out of balance within and not a soul can see it on our faces. We may be broken and need of healing, but settle for limping spiritually in silence.

Continues on back

Outdoor Ministries

Upcoming Retreats:

Stories Jesus Told: How To Read A Parable with Dr. Greg Carey - February 11 - 13

Marriage in the Later Years of Life with Dave & Anne Bushnell - March 2 - 4

Countdown To Opening Day (Fishing, of course!) with Dave Bushnell & Friends - March 16 - 18

Confirmation Retreat - March 27 - 29

What is Good Leadership? with Rev. Dr. Carrie Call - April 14 - 15

Learning to See - A Photography Retreat with Nelson Dodson - April 27 - 29

Pride Retreat for LGBTQ Folks & Allies - May 29-31
(details to come)

SUMMER CAMP REGISTRATION IS OPEN! Early bird pricing for those who pay in full before March 31, 2020. Learn more and register at <https://hartmancenter.com/summer-camp/>

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, Cashtown

Trinity UCC, Centre Hall

Saint John's UCC, Chambersburg

Solomon's UCC, Chambersburg



Message from the Conference cont'

This hamster-wheel of striving grows with expectations that are placed on us by others and by ourselves. We can quote scripture to each other, but we may not internalize it. Our faith sustains us, but we are still not good enough. The truth is that for many clergy – and lay members – our deepest selves are hidden because we fear vulnerability more than just about anything.

The words of scripture do matter. We must remind each other that we are blessed and that Jesus is with us. We are indeed good enough and we do have new life in Christ. Yet the Clergy Sabbath reminded me that we also need places of spiritual refuge where we can share our insecurity and failures without fear. In an ideal world our congregations provide this kind of refuge for our members through dinner groups, fellowship circles, or formation classes. But how do clergy build these types of communities if they do not have a refuge themselves?

In the next few months I plan to initiate conversations with clergy about how we might facilitate small gatherings of refuge and renewal. These may take a variety of forms (Short retreats? Dinner groups? Writing circles?), and I welcome your engagement and ideas. In order to build the beloved community in our congregations, we must also build it among our leaders.

Peace,

Carrie

Upcoming Events

February 22 - ONA Winter Gathering at Colonial Park UCC, Harrisburg PA - 9:30AM-3:00PM

Mended Heart Lenten Concert/Potluck - Salem UCC, Elizabethtown - March 15 - 3:00pm

Stony the Road: A Musical Journey Celebrating African American History with Kellie Turner - Lancaster Theological Seminary, Santee Chapel - February 16, 4:00PM

Stephen Ministry Introductory Workshop - Palm Lutheran Church, Palmyra - March 14, 9:00AM - 1:00PM

PLANNING AHEAD:

York Association Earth Day Anniversary Weekend w/ Jim Antal - Mt. Zion UCC, York - April 18, 9:00AM

Annual Meeting - June 12-13, 2020

Event with Bishop Robert Schnase & Recognition Dinner - September 19, 2020 (info to come!)

Around the conference:

DVD Lending Library - St. John's UCC, Chambersburg, manager@sjucc1811.org or phone (717) 263-8593.

Free Choir Robes - Emmanuel UCC, Hanover

Emmanuel UCC has 36 choir robes (made in the US by E.R. Moore.) They are green, in a traditional style, gathered yoke, front zip with stoles. Call Emmanuel UCC at 717-632-8281 for details.

Looking for Bells - Church of the Apostles, Waynesboro
Narda Druckenmiller is looking for a 2 Octave set of Handbells that another church may not be using or willing to sell. Contact Narda at 717-994-4614

Looking to borrow - A congregational set of "Unbinding Your Heart" by Martha Grace Reese. If your church has a set to lend, contact Hamilton Park UCC, Lancaster (717) 397-9791

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Contact us!

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