



PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE



Empowering churches to proclaim the reconciling love of Christ.

A Message from PCC

March 10, 2021

Friends, I'd like to introduce you to the Rev. Dr. Darryl Stephens. He is the director of the Pennsylvania Academy of Ministry at Lancaster Theological Seminary and we asked him to bring a meditation for us this week both as pause and as invitation to consider the offerings of PAM. The courses are open to laity and clergy alike.

Blessings,
Nora

Members and friends of Penn Central Conference-

*God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear,
though the earth should change,
"Be still, and know that I am God!"
... the God of Jacob is our refuge.*

Psalm 46, NRSV

A colleague in ministry called me recently. A phone call! Not a Zoom session, not a scheduled meeting, not an email or text. It was a spontaneous human connection. Her unexpected intrusion into my Monday morning was a welcome reminder that God is with us, a very present help in time of trouble.

We talked about the challenges of life since COVID. We shared what was weighing on our hearts—the difficulties of social distancing, disrupted activities, and stresses on family life. As we talked, I looked out the window of my home office and took notice of incoming squall. Huge, puffy snowflakes were coming down, quickly and silently covering everything in view, adding to the layers of whiteness I had shoveled only a few days before. The words of the psalmist echoed, though the earth should change . . .

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Outdoor Ministries

In partnership with Lutheran Camping Corporation

Summer Camp: REGISTER ANYTIME!

The 2021 summer camp schedule is set! There are camps for all ages and interests at both Kirchenwald and Nawakwa. Check out what is offered online. There is an early-bird registration discount if you register before April 3. Also, if you attend the Open House, you can get an additional discount.

Summer Staff Recruitment -- GOING ON NOW!

Calling all high school kids, college-age young adults, and adults interested in working at camp this summer! Lutheran Camping Corporation is recruiting now for this summer's camp season. *Continues on back*

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's (Dubs) UCC, Hanover

Trinity UCC, Hanover

Colonial Park UCC, Harrisburg

Pennbrook UCC, Harrisburg



Message from the Conference cont'

"I like the snow," I remarked to my friend as we each stared out our respective windows in wonderment. Snow was upending plans for work and school, adding to our chores for the day. Yet, the disruption seemed to validate the world as it has become. Here was a visible, tangible affirmation of the long winter of COVID we have experienced for nearly a full year. The weather mirrored our reality. God is in the midst of the city.

"Be still, and know that I am God!" Even as God's battle cry resounds across the earth, we await the cessation of wars. Our troubles are not over. Loved ones continue to die. The nations are in an uproar. Life with COVID has seemed an unendurably long Lent. Would that this wilderness experience last only forty days! Yet, during this season of preparation, we will not fear. God is our refuge and strength.

Friends, during this COVID Lent—no matter how many days it may last—the God of Jacob is our refuge. We can be assured of God's steadfastness even as we lament, grieve, repent, hope, and celebrate. God is big enough to encompass the full range of our human experiences and emotions. The Psalms attest to this. And through worship, liturgy, rituals, and sacraments, the church provides us means to connect with God in all seasons of life. No matter the mode of technology or social distancing, God is with us. God is our refuge and strength.

Grace and Peace,

Darryl W. Stephens

Director, Pennsylvania Academy of Ministry

Lancaster Theological Seminary

Darryl W. Stephens is the director of the Pennsylvania Academy of Ministry (PAM) at Lancaster Theological Seminary. He is an ordained deacon in the United Methodist Church and holds dual standing as clergy in the Lancaster Association. The next PAM class, "Introduction to Worship and Liturgical Practices," begins April 10 and lasts for six weeks. Registration is open to laity and clergy: <https://www.lancasterseminary.edu/programs/pennsylvania-academy-of-ministry/>.



Outdoor Ministries cont'

Lenten Day Apart at the Wittel Farm; March 13, 9-4 p.m.; \$15

Lenten Day Apart sessions will include restorative spiritual practices and restorative soil work. We will learn about the soil on the farm and how we can improve its health. We will plant seeds in our greenhouse in the afternoon.

Learn more: www.lutherancamping.org/717-677-8211
lcc@lutherancamping.org

Or contact Anne Rankin, Outdoor Ministries liaison
annerankin524@gmail.com / phone: 717-945-4585

PCC Virtual Choir

The **PCC Virtual Choir** has beautiful Lenten musical selections on the Penn Central Conference YouTube page. A new video of "God So Loved the World" was just posted this week! Click on the YouTube icon on the upper right corner of pccucc.org or search "penn central conference ucc" on YouTube.

Contact us!

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