PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE

A Message from PCC

December 04, 2024

Greeting Penn Central Conference friends and members,

""Because of the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to shine upon those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way of peace." (Luke 1:78-79)

As I sat waiting for a pre-op check-up yesterday, I listened to an elderly mother argue with her middle-aged daughter about the recent election. I wanted to lean over to them and say, "Isn't it time we put these things aside for awhile?" I knew their arguments would convince neither and besides, I wanted peace and quiet. Obviously, that was a selfish wish. And yet I know that many of you yearn for peace too. Not only in public where negativity seems to spread like a virus, but also in our hearts, where various needs, desires, fears, and hopes wrestle. And so we come to the second Sunday in Advent when we light the Peace candle. It seems particularly timely.

At times, the Advent lectionary includes unexpected or unusual bits of scripture that we do not usually see. This week it offers (as an alternate reading) a section of Luke that comes from the prophesy by John the Baptist's father Zechariah. In this prophecy John's role is distinguished as necessary for preparing the way for the Lord who will "guide our feet into the way of peace." This phrase has been rolling through my mind for days. When we look outside of ourselves, we may see little peace. Globally, war and suffering continue. Nationally, our politics lead us away from domestic peace, stoking instead wars of ideology. Locally, simple meanness shows up in policies and decisions that bring confusion and suffering in their wake. Looking around us doesn't offer much evidence of peace.

So, looking for peace, I decided to look within and consider my own life. Because, after all, the only thoughts, words, and behaviors I can control – to the best of my ability – are my own. I wondered at the

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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...

Richfield UCC, Richfield

Grace Evangelical & Reformed UCC, Richfield

St. Paul's UCC, Sacramento

Salem Walmers UCC, Annville



ways I practice peace daily, with and toward those around me. And how was I practicing peace with myself?

I want to encourage you, especially considering the second candle of Advent, to conduct your own 'peace inventory'. We are easily overwhelmed by the lack of peace around us, and we may want to hide, or scream, or run away into the woods! Instead, focus on how God guides your feet in the ways of peace and whether (and to what extent) you fight that guidance or follow it. For me, I found my own answers/practices were related to patience and mindfulness of speech (especially tone). These things seem small, perhaps, but impatience and intemperate speech rarely ever bring or facilitate peace. Additionally, I might have more peace toward myself if I prayed for greater gentleness and acceptance.

We each have an inventory to complete. What does yours reveal? Let's consider our hearts, speech, and actions. How do we shine the light of peace? Advent is a good time to recommit to the Lord who will guide our feet in the way of peace - if we but follow.

Peace,

Carrie,

Rev. Dr. Carrie Call

Conference Minister

Penn Central Conference

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.