



# PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE



Empowering churches to proclaim the reconciling love of Christ.

## A Message from PCC

November 3, 2021

**Dear Members and Friends of Penn Central Conference,**

*For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on. (Mark 12:44 NRSV)*

The lectionary passage from Mark this week seems to appear in some guise every year around this time. It coincides with annual stewardship campaigns, and is held up as an example of what it means to “give to the church.”

I have heard this passage and the coincidence with stewardship for years. I probably even referred to it while serving in the local church. But truthfully the passage makes me uncomfortable. I’ve been thinking about why.

In Chapter 12, for those who follow the lectionary, we already explored the role of the religious leaders who engaged in disputation with Jesus. Their form of question and answer and argument was typical of the religious scholars of the time and allowed Jesus the opportunity to prove himself as a rabbi. The political and esoteric questions (taxes and the resurrection) provide Jesus a stage for verbal sparring, and his demonstrated wisdom evokes the admiration of a passing scribe. The disputation ends with Jesus’ recitation of the Great Commandment (the Jewish Shema) which lays out beautifully what is required of those who claim the Israelite tradition as their own: To Love God with all our mind, soul, heart, and strength. And to love our neighbor as ourselves.

It’s a bit of a surprise then when at the end of the chapter – just before we meet the widow – Jesus warns his listeners about the scribes and their hypocrisy. He claims that they like to walk about in long robes and be greeted with honor in the marketplace. (This description feels a bit pointed since it refers to religious leaders and I can see myself in the critique!) And then we meet

*Continues on back*

## Outdoor Ministries

**In partnership with Lutheran Camping Corporation**

### ANNUAL QUILT AUCTION

November 7 @ Nawakwa This fun-filled day of bidding raises money for the Lutheran Camping Corporation’s Endowment Fund, which helps to financially sustain LCC’s outdoor ministry activities and programs.

### WOMEN'S CRAFT RETREAT

November 12-14 @ Nawakwa [\$155/person] Try new techniques, share your latest creations, work on whatever you've been trying to finish, and enjoy the relaxed atmosphere of camp in the fall. Please register by November 1.

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...

**St. Jacob's UCC, Glenville**

**Salem UCC, Campbelltown**

**Chapel Hill UCC, Camp Hill**

**First UCC, Carlisle**



## Message from the Conference cont'

the widow as she brings her gift to the temple.

Jesus presents the widow as a contrast. After all the previous talk, disputations, and warnings, she is the example Jesus holds up. In the face of all our theologizing, disagreements and judgments, the widow's capacity to give all she has to God remains the best example of a faithful heart. She gives her whole heart, soul and strength. And when I'm honest with myself I know why this makes me uncomfortable. I confess I'm more at home with the theologizing, the scholars' disputes, even the hypocritical scribes (I recognize them, after all). But I do not identify with the widow, in her solitude, poverty and vulnerability. She represents a social position that I fear.

The widow gives what she has in the face of her own poverty. She enters a place of complete vulnerability and total dependence. That willingness to be vulnerable, to lay her life down before God, and to do so freely is the model of faithfulness. Others give of themselves out of their abundance. But the widow, in effect, gives her whole life.

My personal discomfort reflects the knowledge that I am not where she is. Her gift of vulnerability is humbling. I am mired in my own disputations, long robes, and judgments. Yet Jesus continues to redirect my attention to the widow. He reminds me of what is required of the truly faithful heart: trust, vulnerability, and surrender.

**Peace,  
Carrie**

Rev. Dr. Carrie Call  
Conference Minister  
Penn Central Conference

### Address Change!

As you may have been hearing, the PCC offices will be moving in the month of November. Please begin mailing any correspondence to our new PO Box:

**Penn Central Conference**  
**PO Box 6625**  
**Harrisburg, PA 17112**

Our physical address starting the week of November 15  
(Do not mail letters to this address!)

**St. Thomas UCC**  
**6490 Linglestown Road**  
**Harrisburg, PA 17112**

## Wider Church

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.



## Contact us!

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