PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE

A Message from PCC

September 13, 2023

Members and Friends of Penn Central Conference,

"Wisdom cries out in the street; in the squares she raises her voice. How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple? Give heed to my reproof; I will pour out my thoughts to you; I will make my words known to you." Proverbs 1:20-23 (excerpts)

"The Lord God has given me a trained tongue, that I might know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning God awakens my ear to listen as those who are taught." Isaiah 50:4

"Who is wise and knowledgeable among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom." James 3:13-15 (excerpts)

I think fate may have played a large role in the reflection shared here this week, as Google and I mistakenly looked at the lectionary passages for this week in 2024, not 2023. You may hear words on forgiveness from your pulpits this Sunday, but this Sunday next year you'll likely hear about wisdom, and the lifelong pursuit thereof.

I am a former high school social studies teacher, who also dabbled in elementary music, and community college humanities on my way to full-time service and leadership in the church. My vocation, or calling in life, is to teach. It fuels my leadership and drives my passion for taking, leading, and encouraging continuing education - yes for clergy, but truly for all of us! Our knowledge of scripture wasn't complete after confirmation, nor our prayers fully developed with camp song blessings. Building blocks to be sure, but not the whole of our spiritual selves.

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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...

Salem UCC, Elizabethville

Bethany UCC, Ephrata

St. John's UCC, Spring Mills

Trinity UCC, Fort Loudon



Listening for God's direction in our lives is wisdom seeking. It informs a living that demonstrates God's love. One way to seek wisdom and listen for God is through educational opportunities. Here in Penn Central, we have a number of programs available this fall for both clergy and lay. Learning and engaging knowledge can open each of us to the movement of the Spirit that transforms us and opens us to responding to God's call, especially when we don't understand, or maybe even want, that call. Education expands horizons and helps us question our own assumptions about life, scripture, people, and God.

Lay Boundary Training Monday Sept 18 to include discussion on healthy church relationships, power differentials, solid financial practices, as well as self- and pastoral- care.

Justice Conversations for Clergy Tuesday Sept 19 with ELCA Assistant to the Bishop and Heidelberg UCC Pastor, Rev. Carla Christopher

October 11th will host the final sessions of Humility as Spiritual Practice boundary discussion for Clergy.

October 16th is the next helping of Synod Seconds where we gather to discuss practical implementation steps for some of the synod resolutions. Open to all.

I am also hosting 3 introductory sessions for learning about the fifth founding stream of the UCC, the Afro-Christian Connection largely out of the southeastern US. The first is on October 15th and open to everyone.

We will also gather several times for Keystone Town Hall discussions about merging with the other UCC conferences across the keystone state.

This short list doesn't include each of the fall meetings that are planned for most associations or the regular spiritual formation programming at local churches. All of these gatherings are opportunities to situate your mind, body, and spirit to listen for God's call in our often chaotic world.

Wisdom cries out from everywhere. May it be our prayer that we wake each morning as ones ready to listen as learners so that our lives are lived demonstrating a gentleness and love born of wisdom.

Shalom,

Nora

Rev. Dr. Nora Foust
Associate Conference Minister
Penn Central Conference

Lay Leader Boundary Awareness – Healthy Church Relations – This 90-minute introductory session for lay leaders in the church will introduce issues of power, multiple relationships, church money, social media, and health information sharing practices built around a behavioral covenant. It's sure to be an enlightening and empowering conversation. Please join this important conversation at 6:30pm on September 18th.

PCC Fall Budget Meeting

November 11, 2023 9:30 AM

This year's Annual Meeting included a vote for the Penn Central Conference to have a Budget Meeting in the fall. Each authorized minister is a voting member and each church is allowed two delegates to vote. These can be, but do not have to be, the same delegates as went to Annual Meeting. We do still need to reach quorum.

This meeting will be on Zoom only, and will include a budget presentation and vote. We anticipate it to take no more than 60 - 90 minutes.

Synod Seconds – A Keystone-wide Conversation

Join conference staff and delegates from across the keystone state as we explore implementation of General Synod Resolutions and looks at snap-shots of wider-church life. We'll be starting with 3 zooms this fall, September 11, October 16, and November 13 from 6:30-8 pm. All are welcome. Please register.