PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE

A Message from PCC

January 3, 2024

Greetings members and friends of Penn Central Conference,

"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has fallen upon you." (Isaiah 61:1)

Epiphany falls on this coming Saturday. The lectionary readings remind us of the light that will dawn upon a redeemed Israel (Isiah 61:1-6), and the visit of the wise men to the boy Jesus (Matthew 3:1-12). The words of the prophet Isaiah are poetic and powerful, igniting a sense of hope amid despair, and promise amid hopelessness. Historically in the church, the visit of the Magi symbolized the manifestation of "the light of knowledge of Christ" to the Gentiles. Both Isaiah and Matthew speak of a sense of renewed hope symbolized by the light of the Lord.

As visual creatures, we understand the power of light. We know light manifests itself in our lives spiritually (illumination of the Holy Spirit), psychologically (insights), intellectually (dawning of understanding), and even emotionally (bringing light to another's life). Light is, perhaps, our most common metaphor. At the beginning of this New Year, we may seek it more than ever. We pray for the light of wisdom and compassion to shine in hearts torn by war, shaken by political infighting, weary of injustice, and chained by emotional wounds.

To that end, I wish to share a poem by Jan Richardson from her book Circle of Grace (2015). I invite you to read it slowly, out loud to yourself or in church for Epiphany. The words are simple, yet they resonate with meaning that will be different for each person. As we seek the light of God this New Year, let us also seek to be the light to others.

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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...

St. John's UCC, McEwensville

St. John's UCC, McKnightstown

St. Paul's UCC, Mechanicsburg

Trinity UCC, Mercersburg



How the Light Comes

I cannot tell you
how the light comes.
What I know
is that it is more ancient
than imagining.
That it travels
across an astounding expanse
to reach us.
That it loves
searching out
what is hidden,
what is lost,
what is forgotten
or in peril
or in pain.
That it has a fondness
for the body,
for finding its way
towards flesh,
for tracing the edges of form,
for shining forth
through the eye,
the hand,
the heart.
I cannot tell you
how the light comes
but that it does.
That it will.
That it works its way
into the deepest dark
that enfolds you,
though it may seem
long ages in coming
or arrive in a shape
you did not foresee.
And so
may we this day
turn ourselves toward it.
May we lift our faces
to let it find us.
May we bend our bodies
to follow the arc it makes.
May we open
and open more
and open still
to the blessed light
that comes.

Peace,

Carrie

Rev. Dr. Carrie Call
Conference Minister
Penn Central Conference