PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE

A Message from PCC

October 25, 2023

Members and Friends of Penn Central Conference,

"A healing tongue is a tree of life but perversion in it breaks the spirit." (Proverbs 15:4)

These past two weeks have been difficult. I have engaged in multiple conversations about the Middle East: the complexity of the history, the competing "goods" related to land and safety, the brutality of the attack on Israel by Hamas, and the devastation of Palestinians. There is horror on all sides. What can be especially difficult for people of faith is we have little to no influence on the state of the war when it comes to government action or military strategy. We face an enormous drama to which most of us will only be witnesses.

When the drama is geo-political and the suffering immense, I know that I ask myself what I can do in response? Or how may I do anything to make any kind of difference? While we may feel small in the face of the war between Israel and Hamas, we are still effective, important, and 'large' in our own world, and the world of those around us.

As my reading of Proverbs has continued, I have come back to a single verse in chapter 15 several times. The sage writes, "A healing tongue is a tree of life…" This is the only mention of the tree of life outside of Genesis. The tree of life is one of the oldest symbols in human religious thought, speaking variously to the connection between the earth and the sky, the creation and the Creator, a dwelling place of ancestors, and a place of enlightenment. Here the sage reminds the reader of the power of speech, and it is in speech that you and I can

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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...

Zion UCC, Herndon

Church of the Redeemer UCC, Hershey

Emmanuel UCC, Howard

Hummelstown UCC, Hummelstown



do our (very small) part in bringing healing to the world.

I cannot speak to world leaders or to those suffering in Israel and Gaza. But I can speak to the people around me – to the strangers I meet, to my colleagues, friends, debating partners, and those who oppose my faith. Scholar Ellen Davis writes about the reference to the tree of life, "The inference would seem to be that wise speaking points the way back to Eden. More than any other sphere of human activity, speaking has the potential to effect healing at the deepest level. It is a tree of life; it restores us to the condition of harmony with God and our fellow creatures for which we were made."[i]

The sage also knows how speech can do tremendous damage, breaking apart relationships and trust, wrecking reputations and lives. All the more important is our contribution of healing, restorative speech; speaking or preaching grace into places of despair or pain. As Davis notes, "We have not completely lost the understanding that true speaking holds the power of life. This is the presupposition common to poets and psychotherapists, to those who pray and write love letters, to those who ask for forgiveness and wait hopefully to hear absolution pronounced by a minister or loved one."[ii]

While political words of war fly above our heads in these troubled days, may our own tongues bring nothing but healing, and may our words be a tree of life.

Peace,

Carrie

Rev. Dr. Carrie Call

Conference Minister

Penn Central Conference

[i] Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs, 2002 (Louisville: Westminster John Knox), p.97.

[ii] Ibid.

Register for the following at https://pccucc.org/register-for-an-event/

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. November 13 from 6:30-8 pm. All are welcome. Please register.

Choose from three in person and one Zoom Town Hall to learn more about the **Keystone Project**, the current working group's assessments and how they are visioning "Together we are stronger: the Keystone Conference."

November 1, 6:30PM - Zoom Only

November 15, 6:30PM - Quentin UCC, Quentin (in-person only)

The Virtual Choir is starting up! The 2023-24 season will begin with a new Christmas Carol by John Rutter for our churches to use during the Christmas season! Contact Julie Holm, bvfofmusic@gmail.com to be part of the fun! Tracks will be available by November 5, and orientation sessions will be held the week before.