



# PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE



Empowering churches to proclaim the reconciling love of Christ.

## A Message from PCC

**December 18, 2019**

Dear friends of Penn Central Conference,

***“Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.” (Matthew 1:19)***

Joseph is a shadowy figure in the nativity story. His presence is felt, but he doesn't speak a word. In Christian history Joseph is relegated to the sideline intentionally. The image on this page, for example, is still viewed as heretical by the Orthodox Church. According to dogma, Joseph was not Jesus' father and therefore did not have a relationship with Jesus "in the flesh", but only spiritually. Therefore, this type of image – which I love because of Jesus' cheek touching the cheek of Joseph – is "misleading" because Jesus should only be depicted in such a pose with his mother. In this case I am thankful that ours is not the dogma of the Orthodox church.

On the contrary, I love these images because they push us to consider Joseph anew. His actions tell a compelling story. In Matthew's and Luke's versions Joseph demonstrates his love of God (and Mary!) through faithfulness and courage. When we pay close attention to Joseph's actions, we see hints of the form of character that foreshadows the sacrificial life Jesus demands of his followers.

Joseph must have loved Mary. In the story, Joseph stays with her, even with her mysterious pregnancy and the looming threat of an adul-

*Continues on back*



## Upcoming Retreats:

**Men's Retreat: Seasons of a Man's Life** Friday, January 17, 2020 at 7PM - Sunday January 19, 2020 at 1PM register online

**The PCC Confirmation Retreat** will be held March 27 - 29, 2020 at Hartman Center. This weekend is always a great opportunity for our confirmands to explore "Being The Church" and to connect with other youth.

**SUMMER CAMP REGISTRATION IS OPEN!**

Early bird pricing for those who pay in full before March 31, 2020.

Learn more and register at <https://hartmancenter.com/summer-camp/>

## 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...

**Heidelberg UCC, York**

**Locust Grove UCC, York**

**Mount Zion UCC, York**

**St. Stephen's UCC, York**



## Message from the Conference cont'

tery charge as an unmarried woman. Joseph, instead of publically denouncing her, as was his right to do (and pride may have demanded), determines to dismiss her quietly. Even more surprising is that Joseph followed the directive of an angel and spent the next nine months living with a woman who was pregnant with a child who was not his own. His faithfulness in light of such social pressure is worthy of note. Joseph follows the call of God, slogging upstream against the religious and familial norms, laws, and values of the time. He holds Mary's life in his hands and chooses protection over rejection.

The life to which he commits demonstrates courage in the face of despotic rule and geographical dislocation. Yet even more provocative to me is his courage in the face of deep mystery. During the wanderings, dreams and exile, he trusts what he is told and walks into this new life without a plan. His faith in the face of fear is a model for us. Joseph embraces his family and raises Jesus as his son (see Luke 4:22). He walks through mystery, committed to a divine plan he cannot yet see.

All the more reason to remember Joseph and his central role in this season.

**Peace,  
Carrie**

Congratulations to **Shiloh UCC, Danville** on their work to make the body of Christ to accessible to all! Penn Central Conference is proud to acknowledge our first A2A church, and only the thirteenth in the denomination. Last week Shiloh received their letter of certification that they are Accessible To All. To learn how your church can join Shiloh UCC, Danville in being A2A, see the UCC Disabilities Ministries website at <http://uccdm.org/>.

### Upcoming Town Halls w/ Rev. Carrie Call

**January 12** - York Association Town Hall - Mt. Zion UCC, York - 2:00PM

**February 3** - Harrisburg Association Town Hall-Chapel Hill UCC, Camp Hill - 6:00PM

## Upcoming Events

**"As He Did Unto Others" Music Sundays** - Dr. Robert Horton - LTS Santee Chapel - January 5, 4:00PM

### Planning Ahead:

ONA Winter Gathering at Colonial Park UCC, Harrisburg PA - February 22, 2020

Annual Meeting - June 12-13, 2020

Event with Bishop Robert Schnase - September 19, 2020 (info to come!)

**Check out other upcoming events on our website:**

<https://pccucc.org/calendar/>

**Read our full weekly eNews:**

<https://pccucc.org/enews-archive/>

**Sign up for our weekly eNews:**

Link at bottom of any page on [www.pccucc.org](http://www.pccucc.org)

*Don't forget to choose Penn Central Conference of the United Church of Christ as your AmazonSmile recipient before you begin your holiday shopping!*

## Contact us!

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