



PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE



Empowering churches to proclaim the reconciling love of Christ.

A Message from PCC

June 02, 2021

Members and friends of Penn Central Conference -

"For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall make a name for the Lord, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." Isaiah 55:12-13

"Are we there yet?" our children would ask as we travelled to our vacation destination. "Soon, very soon. Take a nap, do some reading." Silence for no more than 12 minutes, and then again, "Are we there yet?" After a half dozen of these complaints, my patience wore thin and I ratcheted up a notch: "Stop asking. We'll get there when we get there!" Which led to the kids to ratchet it up: "Ah, we're so bored!"

I must admit after this long year of suffering and uncertainty, I am asking God (and anyone else who will listen): "Are we there yet?" Answers of "soon" or "almost there" don't cut it with me any more than those responses cut it with my kids. Yes many, many people are vaccinated and the Governor is predicting 70% by the end of June. Yes, many churches in Penn Central are opening or are planning openings soon. And yet, we're not there yet, are we? I know I constantly look over my shoulder at the possibility of a new variant breaking through my vaccination. And many experts say that the new normal will be different from what we've known. But we

Continues on back

Outdoor Ministries

In partnership with Lutheran Camping Corporation

Summer Camp: REGISTER ANYTIME!

The 2021 summer camp schedule is set! There are camps for all ages and interests at both Kirchenwald and Nawakwa. Check out what is offered online.

Summer Staff Recruitment -- GOING ON NOW!

Hartman Center Spirit Week:

Week of August 8 at Camp Mount Luther, Mifflinburg.

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...

Zion UCC, Marietta

St. John's UCC, Markleville

Maytown Reformed UCC, Maytown

St. James UCC, Littlestown



Message from the Conference cont'

don't know yet what it will look like.

The Hebrew people to whom Isaiah was prophesying were asking similar questions. They had been in exile, stripped of their land, suffering great financial and person loss; and were asking "are we there yet?" Are we going back to our homeland, even though it will be occupied by the Babylonians? Unlike my children who complained that the long trip caused them tribulation, these Hebrews knew true tribulation.

We may feel like we have gone through great tribulation this past year. Many of us have suffered unspeakable trials of loss: loss of loved ones, loss of health, loss of job security. Some of us have been terribly inconvenienced and long for a return to "normal", or a semblance thereof.

Isaiah told the Hebrew people to take heart, to be assured that they will know joy again: "Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up myrtle." In spite of unspeakable grieving, God will make good, Isaiah is telling them. For me these words of Isaiah speak to a God who knows the peoples' pain and brings healing out of that pain; brings hope out of understandable despair.

And Isaiah also tells the people: "You shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace" Will we experience that? "The mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." Can we imagine that for ourselves? Can we grasp these words of the prophet speaking the word of God to us?

"Are we there yet?" Maybe we won't know exactly where "there" is. But I think God is saying to us that God has been with us every step of the journey this past year. And I am reminded of another prophesy from Isaiah:

"Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. God does not faint or grow wea-

ry; God's understanding is unsearchable. God gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." Isaiah 40:28-31

"Are we there yet?" Maybe not quite yet and we don't know quite when. But maybe until then we can embrace and bind our wounds, heal and soothe those who have known tribulation, and enter—together—onto the journey toward joy, peace, strength, and hope.

Praying for you to know blessing upon blessing,

Marisa

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