PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE

A Message from PCC

July 31, 2024

Greetings Penn Central members and friends,

"Be strong and courageous; have no fear or dread of others, because it is the Lord your God who goes with you; God will not fail you or forsake you." Deut 31:6

Greetings from Hartman Center Campground and Retreat in Milroy, PA! I am here at the HC Spirit Camp with about 100 campers and volunteers. As I have shared before, campers are learning about how we are all "Linked by Love" as we explore friendships, scriptures, nature, and our very selves this week. Church camp holds a very special place in my heart and my history. Like many, I found footing in my ministerial call at camp. I greatly expanded my comfort zone while hiking, climbing rocks, white water rafting, and more by experiencing camp. I was even married at the river chapel where I spent many a morning in watch and evening in vespers. Nostalgia is strong and can carry me away into the distant past quickly when camp comes to mind.

Nostalgia shows up for various reasons and at different times in our lives. Anxiety about our present and/or future can cause us to recall with great fondness days of old. We all know we are not living in "days of old" and so must harness and use well the energy found in nostalgic remembering. To that end, I've been re-reading Gil Rendle's "Quietly Courageous." Rendle dedicates a whole chapter to nostalgia saying, "nostalgia is tempting because it can be pleasant and reassuring." He encourages us to go further and use it to ask questions about a new purpose based on who we have become since that time we are remembering fondly. In other words, to be honest about who we are right now and how God is calling us to be in the world going into the future.

When I catch myself in that rose-colored and selective view of the past, I work to focus the energy created by nostalgia to move me forward in how I envision not only camping, but whatever I am remembering fondly, for today's church. In the church we can get caught up in the memories of how things used to be in our congregations.

Continues on back

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...

Grace UCC, Hanover

St. David's (Sherman's) UCC, Hanover

St. Paul's Dubs UCC, Hanover

Trinity UCC, Hanover



Nostalgia can trap us in a one-sided story that lets us avoid the sometimes-hard questions of today. Further, these memories may generate energy, sometimes negative energy around why we can't be "that way" again. Rendle reminds us that the past cannot be recaptured as the world has changed significantly. Instead, we can harness this energy in positive ways to generate vision and move the church into what God is calling us toward today, and tomorrow.

How will might your congregation harness that energy next time nostalgia arrives at a planning meeting?

Shalom,

Nora

Rev. Dr. Nora Foust

Associate Conference Minister

Penn Central Conference

Explore our German roots! The PCC-EKiR partnership with the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland, Germany, is looking for leaders for their next generation project to participate in two ecumenical church meetings, one in the fall, in Wisconsin, and one in the spring in Wuppertal, Germany. Clergy and involved laypeople in age up to the early 40s are sought. The partnership committee has a commitment to pursuing grants and other funding for your travel expenses. We prefer people who can commit to both meetings, but will consider people who can only commit to one. This is a significant ecumenical continuing education and relationship opportunity! For more information contact Julie Holm at julie@bvfof.org!

UCC Wellness Ministries Handbook for Visitation

Are you visiting a person or writing a note on behalf of the church? Aren't sure what to do or say to this person?

This handbook furnishes information to guide you in each encounter and provides scripture passages, prayers, and blessings you can easily use.

This Handbook replaces the now-retired Called to Care Pocket Handbook for Caregivers.

The Handbook will be available from the UCC Resources Store by early fall.