

PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE



Empowering churches to proclaim the reconciling love of Christ.

A Message from PCC

August 18, 2021

Dear friends and members of Penn Central Conference,

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 weary; 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

For my last epistle on August 4, I focused on "What do you need?" In that epistle I centered on what any of us may need as we go through hard times, uncertain times, times of grieving; times of wondering about our individual, family, and church future—especially as COVID continues to grip us.

Two weeks later, I could republish the same epistle and it would still be relevant for us. It is always relevant for us to ask, "What do you need? What do I need?"

This week I'd like to turn the lens just a bit toward how God meets us in our need, especially who God is and how God helps us and strengthens us. Being reminded of what we know full well—that God is everlasting and tireless—can be very comforting when we feel faint, or powerless, or weary to the point of exhaustion. We may not like to hear that we need to WAIT for God to revitalize us, but O the experience we have when we do wait upon God: renewing our strength, flying like eagles, running and not fainting.

In my role as ACM that oversees church transition and empowerment, my thoughts and heart are very much with all of you in our churches who struggle, feel faint, who need to (continue to) WAIT on God; who can look forward to flying and running. I am also heartened to have preached in many churches this summer and experienced the love, the welcome, the community, the willingness to find new ways of being church that reach

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Outdoor Ministries

In partnership with Lutheran Camping Corporation

THE GROWING PROJECT

Volunteer for The Growing Project through October! This project reclaims a portion of the acreage for farming. The crops harvested are donated to assist those in need in Lancaster County.

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.

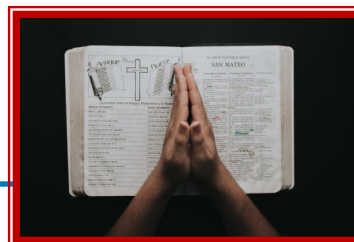
This week, we pray for each other as we continue to live into God's calling...

Faith UCC, State College

St. Peters UCC, State College

Trinity UCC, State Line

First Reformed UCC, Sunbury



Message from the Conference cont'

out to more and more in your greater communities.

As we rise from the ashes of the pandemic (and with the beautiful reminders in Isaiah, I believe we will rise), we will be poised to wonder anew how God yearns to give us strength and vision to be God's church in the 21st century.

In that spirit, I encourage you to look for a survey that I am sending out to you this week in which I invite pastors and laity to consider participating in an endeavor regarding the health and future of your congregation. The Congregational Empowerment Team is planning in 2022 to hold a Congregational Empowerment Academy for all churches of any size and situation. You may recall that we offered an Academy during 2021 and 14 churches participated.

As we anticipate such an Academy, we hope to hear from you the topics that would be helpful to your church. Topics that we are mulling include:

- Right-sizing governance—particularly for smaller churches
- Considering shared ministry with another church
- Becoming a vital mission center in your community

We want to hear from you. Please respond to the survey and let us know if these topics would be helpful, or if there are other topics that you would like to explore. The overarching question is: "What do you need?" What do you need in the next 6 months, year, and beyond?

Beloved, I deeply know that we continue to be in the midst of uncertain times and we are all dancing as well as we can. We all need a break from the continued concerns around how and how long the pandemic will continue to be front and center in our considerations for being and doing church. We all need to rest and to wait upon God. I also hope we can look to our future—as early as 2022—to participate in conversations around how our churches can be empowered and vital for the future of God's church in the Penn Central Conference.

I remain faithfully your Associate Conference Minister for congregational transition and empowerment.

**Blessing upon blessing,
Marisa**

The Rev. Dr. Marisa Laviola

Associate Conference Minister for Congregational Transitions

Penn Central Conference

Local Church Events

"Dr. Joe" Utterback live in concert!

Friday, August 20, 7PM - Free Admission

Colonial Park UCC, Harrisburg

Sunday, August 22, 7PM – Free Admission

Christ Church, Elizabethtown

2021 Old Zion Reformed Church Anniversary Service

Theme: "Don't Join the Cloister"

Sunday, September 12th at 4:00 p.m.

General Synod

Our Synod delegates met online and in person in July. One of the tasks of the delegates was voting on resolutions. Over the next few weeks, many of your delegates will share a brief overview of resolutions, the action taken at Synod, and if available, some resources for learning more. Some of them may inspire you to learn more! Catch them in the online eNews, to subscribe email pkeller@pccucc.org or at pccucc.org/enews-archive

Contact us!

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