PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE

A Message from PCC

August 8, 2023

Members and Friends of Penn Central Conference,

"It is not possible to capture everything that is in my heart right now," wrote Rev. Betsy Bruaw in her Saturday Facebook post at the close of the HC Spirit Homecoming week of camp. She spoke for many with those words. I, too, have found myself working harder than expected to describe the week for others.

We are just starting to look over evaluations, but one camper remarked that "vespers were excellent. One of the best spiritual experiences I've had!" Another commented that the "meals were excellent and delicious," with great variety. Camp Director Rev. Alice Rauch added, "my heart is filled with joy and gratitude! We had a wonderful group of volunteers and campers who made our HC Spirit Homecoming week full of fun, activity, spiritual growth, and deepening faith; all in community."

I am passionate about outdoor and camping ministry, a passion that was born in the summer of 1986 along the banks of the Johns River in Collettesville, NC. I believe there is so much to be learned in intentional Christian community under God's natural cathedral. Leadership skills, spiritual grounding, confidence, perseverance, covenant life, among other skills were honed in that river valley over 30+ summers.

The same can be true no matter the camp, if the intentionality is there. Last week at the HC Spirit Homecoming Camp at Hartman Center Campground and Retreat (link), there was great intentionality among leadership and volunteers to center and prioritize the camper experience toward similar

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...

Trinity UCC, Centre Hall

St. John's UCC, Chambersburg

Solomon's UCC, Chambersburg

Zion UCC, Chambersburg



goals. More than 100 campers and volunteers arrived at our former camp to find both new and familiar comforts and challenges. I watched young campers find voice in worship and study, find confidence in rising to challenges, and I peeked in as volunteers found ways to adjust on the fly and make plans work in a new way. There were certainly learnings from this first time back that will inform our planning and preparation for future events at the campground.

Our volunteer workforce from cooks to nurses, lifeguards, program directors, and cabin counselors to adventure coordinators were invaluable and "thank you" just doesn't feel like quite enough to recognize your gifts. Yet, again I offer thanksgiving for each of you who made the week possible with gifts of time, talents, passion, and presence.

"Nostalgia is not vision," Rev. Dr. Chris Davies offered in an outdoor ministry planning workshop and it is true for us in Penn Central Conference as we find new ways to camp at Hartman, Nawakwa, and Kirchenwald. Camp memories cannot be recreated, but we need to invite a new generation of campers and leaders to create their own experiences and memories to share with generations of the future.

Shalom,

Nora

Rev. Dr. Nora Foust

Associate Conference Minister

Penn Central Conference

Camp Director Pastor Alice shares, "please mark your calendar for next year's HC Spirit camp at Hartman Center Campground and Retreat Center - Sunday, July 28th through Saturday, August 3rd, 2024. In addition to the cabins and lodges, the new owners are working on RV sites that should be ready before next summer. We would love it if lots of Penn Central Conference folks are able to reserve and use those sites while we are there."

Wondering how your congregation might engage in outdoor ministry? Camps and retreats aren't the only recipients of grant funds. Kayak church, fire pit fellowships, community gardens, and solar projects are just a few of the ideas discussed for funding. The application window is currently open with applications available here.

Thanks again to all who made our HC Spirit Camp a great success! We hope to see you, and more, next summer July 28-August 3.



Lay Leader Boundary Awareness – Healthy Church Relations – This 90-minute introductory session for lay leaders in the church will introduce issues of power, multiple relationships, church money, social media, and health information sharing practices built around a behavioral covenant. It's sure to be an enlightening and empowering conversation. Please join this important conversation at 6:30pm on September 18th.

http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=betijzaab&oeidk=a07ejwrvht8d36a12ef