



PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE



Celebrating 60 Years of Ministry

A Message from PCC

December 07, 2022

Greetings Members and Friends of Penn Central Conference,

"Do not be Afraid...."

Was Mary immediately calmed by the Angel Gabriel's words, or was her first thought, 'Easy for you to say that, robed in all that power.' My guess is that it took some time for her to accept the reassurance. Who among us easily or quickly change our mind concerning long held beliefs and attitudes, especially when our lives are suddenly turned upside down. When her meeting with the Angel ended and Mary had heard all that Gabriel told her, she then picked up and went to her relative Elizabeth for counsel and consolation.

The nostalgia we associate with the Christmas Story and season frequently finds us reading the accounts without giving much thought to the impact on characters involved. If we take a moment, we can easily begin to appreciate the confusion and fear Mary experienced at that moment. What could possibly have prepared her ahead of time for such an encounter?

Doing the will of God is rarely a walk in the park. And for Mary the words, 'Do not be afraid', were not a promise that everything would be okay. We see many times wherein Mary had to pluck up the courage to cope with the journey God presented. As with her first encounter with the Angel Gabriel, Mary would frequently need time, prayer and consolation prior to finding the solace in the words, "Do not be afraid."

Beyond the nostalgia and possibly thinking about how these events impacted Mary, I believe the story invites us to consider deeply just how we respond to our own calling to ever be-

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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.

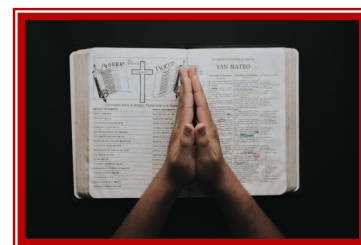
This week, we pray for each other as we continue to live into God's calling...

Zion UCC, Herndon

Church of the Redeemer UCC, Hershey

Emmanuel UCC, Howard

Hummelstown UCC, Hummelstown



come disciples of our Lord. “Do not be afraid,” is this not a part of the message to each of us in our individual calling. We like Mary may well respond, “It is easy for you to say that, but you are not confronted by what I am.” The pull of and challenges from culture to our well being are always confronting our professions of faith. So how do any of us find the confidence to go forth in confidence?

If we consider how Mary went forward meeting with Elizabeth and, in what was likely a lengthy meeting, Mary found her voice. In prayer, thought, discussion Mary embraced the words of ‘Fear not’ and proclaimed her willingness to be God’s servant. Mary’s assent began a long, challenging and heartbreaking journey. But through it all, as she continued to experience her role and accept it as her pathway, we sense her discovering that God only appeared to her on that unexpected occasion but was always with her. It is the same promise to each of us that will guide and inspire us as we cope with our call to discipleship.

Rick

Rev. Rick Luciotti

Coordinator of Clergy Care

Penn Central Conference



Looking Ahead:

"Making All Things New"

General Synod 2023

“Making All Things New” will be the theme of the 34th biennial General Synod of the United Church of Christ, scheduled for June 30–July 4, 2023, in Indianapolis.

The General Synod of the United Church of Christ will get back to business a year from now. And it will do so in person.

After an all-virtual experience in 2021, the UCC’s biennial national meeting will require all voting delegates to be in Indianapolis in 2023. That’s according to the Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson, the associate general minister who serves as Synod administrator.. Delegates and visitors will meet June 30 through July 4 at the Indianapolis Convention Center.

UCC national setting hosts a variety of webinars for clergy and lay people alike. See the upcoming events and register for them online at: <https://www.ucc.org/events/>

