



PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE



Empowering churches to proclaim the reconciling love of Christ.

A Message from PCC

April 15, 2020

Dear Friends of Penn Central Conference -

"Then Jesus said to them, 'Don't be afraid!'" Mt 28:10

We are living in a time of uncertainty. Our lives as we know it have been turned upside down. Many of us have never witnessed nor experienced a time when we are quarantined to our homes, or when grocery store's shelves are vacant, when the air is filled with fear and anxieties.

Ironically, in our Gospel reading on Easter morning taken from the book of Matthew, it reveals a four-word phrase: "do not be afraid." The phrase came first as an instruction from an angel and then again, given as an instruction from Jesus Christ. It is a simple phrase. However, in times like these when we are consumed with fear of contracting a deadly virus, how can we not be filled with fear?

Easter morning this year was celebrated quite differently from years past. The sweet aroma of the Easter flowers did not fill the sanctuaries. Nor did the Easter lilies gather at the bases of the cross. Pews were empty in most churches. And the melody of the familiar hymn "He Lives" was not sung by congregations. For me as well as others, church services were mostly done virtually, either by pre-recorded church services, by Zoom, or by other means of virtual worship.

The question that many of us may be asking is, where is the Good News? The answer is in the Resurrection. Whether we are inside of the sanctuaries, or behind the screens in our own homes, Christ is Risen.....He is Risen indeed!

Even amid the Coronavirus pandemic, when everything has changed and has caused uncertainty, there is Good News and it is the one thing that remains consistent. He is risen. Jesus assured Martha at the tomb of her beloved brother Lazarus. "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me will live, even though he dies." (JN 11: 25-26) Christ will raise us up on that last day. By the Holy Spirit, in our Christian life and faith, we are already in some way participating in the death and resurrec-

tion of Jesus Christ.

Easter is a celebration that encourages us and gives us hope. Even while experiencing paralyzing fear and uncertainty, Easter is a great reminder that life is worth living. We hold the presence of the Risen Christ that we hold deep in our souls and in our churches, and in the eucharist. This presence of Christ gives us positive meaning to each one of our prayers, especially in times of trouble.

Let us be surrounded in peace through those four words: "Do not be afraid." Let us turn our sorrows, our fears, our anxieties into the comfort that we are not alone. Our Risen Lord is with us, always. He is risen.... He is risen indeed! Hallelujah.

Blessings,

Rev. Dr. Ronnette Comfort-Butler

Facilitator of Care to Clergy & Clergy Care

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...

David's UCC, Herndon

St. Paul's UCC, Herndon

Zion UCC, Herndon

Church of the Redeemer UCC, Hershey

