Fifth Stream Conversations - Rev. Dr. Nora is planning three fall conversations open to the whole church on the recognition of the UCC's fifth founding stream, the Afro-Christian Convention. At Synod the Historical Council made a formal report that the Afro-Christian Convention has been named the "fifth stream" alongside the Congregational, Christian, German Reformed, and Evangelical Synod. The Convention was always a part of the denomination but had been lumped in with the (white) Christian stream. There were, as Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer put it in his official apology, "always five." He shared his grief of how so many children and adults had learned that there were only four theological streams/traditions present at our founding and this fifth tradition had been willfully subjugated, rather than lifted up for recognition.

This will be exciting learning for us as we explore the Afro-Christian Convention together and refresh our existing knowledge around the Christian, Congregational, Evangelical, and Reformed traditions also present at our founding. The first two sessions will be largely the same with in-person and zoom options available and the November date will be sort of a deeper dive into the Afro-Christian Convention with some of the contributors to the new book Afro-Christian Convention: The Fifth Stream of the United Church of Christ available from Pilgrim Press, Amazon, and your favorite local bookseller.

3pm September 24th Mt. Zion, York In-person and Zoom
3pm October 15th St. Paul's at the Farm, Lewisburg In-Person and Zoom
3pm November 12th ZOOM for all Participants

Register here: https://penncentralconference.regfox.com/the-fifth-stream

Boundary Awareness and Anti-Racism Training - Intersectionality and Power Dynamics – In this session, Nora will discuss ways in which we as leaders in the church navigate ever changing power dynamics as culturally more and more important intersections are defined. Her participation in a training event with Rev Lori Tapia, the DOC National Pastor for Hispanic Ministries, and Dr. Sharon Fennema, our UCC Curator for Join the Movement, led to the development of this culturally relevant discussion.

These sessions on October 25th are open to anyone clergy or lay. Register for the 10am or 6pm Zoom sessions here. Each are 2-hours.

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.

Clergy Boundary Awareness - Humility as Spiritual Practice – This will be the final offering of this high demand topic as Nora explores learnings from her summer 2022 sabbatical and

memoir reading. Humility is something often spoken of, but more elusive when it comes to actual practice. We practice things so that we can get better. Athletes practice their sport regularly, even professional athletes. Musicians practice to improve their craft. A former church organist used to always say, "perfect practice makes perfect," as she shut down the organ each day or finished up with students rehearing for recital. I practice centering prayer because I am truly terrible at it. I practice so that I can get incrementally better at that Mary moment of sitting at Jesus' feet.

Memoir reading invited humility practice. It was a practice honoring different experiences and recognizing those as real and true, even if very different from my own understanding of the world. Come join me, and instruction from Sister Joan Chittister and the Benedictine Ladder of Humility, as we explore where boundaries and humility meet. October 1st at 10am and 6pm. Please register for this 2-hour session.

A Fall Book Study – Rev. Dr. Nora Foust will lead a two-night discussion on Clint Smith's 2021 NY Times bestseller, ***How the Word is Passed: A Reckoning with the History of Slavery in America***. In this book Smith looks at the different ways that historical stories are retold as he travels from his birthplace in New Orleans to the Whitney Plantation, Angola State Prison, Blanford Cemetery, Monticello, Goree Island, Galveston Island, Dakar, Senegal, and more, listening to the various ways that the historical story of these locations are told. It is a powerful way to think about how we learn about the past and what we each think of as THE STORY. Smith writes, "my grandparent's stories are my inheritance; each one an heirloom I carry." (p. 288)

In these sessions, we will discuss our heirlooms, Smith's inheritance, and how those both impact the ways in which we are church in the world today. All are welcome to join the discussion on November 6th and 7th 6:30-8pm on zoom. Please register. *(These sessions can be used for clergy boundary credits with approval from your COM and a written reflection on boundaries and the ministry of holding sacred stories.)*

Synod Seconds – A Keystone-wide Conversation – Join conference staff and delegates from across the keystone state as we explore implementation of General Synod Resolutions and looks at snap-shots of wider-church life. We'll be starting with 3 zooms this fall, September 11, October 16, and November 13 from 6:30-8 pm. All are welcome. Please register.

Ministerial Excellence Forums for Clergy Continuing Education Please register. (10am hybrid at 6094 Linglestown Road, Harrisburg and zoom, 6pm zoom only)

- **September 19th** Rev. Carla Christopher will lead us in the work of Justice Conversations with our congregations. This 2-hour session covers boundary awareness and anti-racism credits.
- **October 17th** LTS President Emeritus Peter Schmiechen will lead discussion on his book *Tradition in Crisis: The Case for Centric Protestants*. Pre-reading is not required.
- **November 21st** Rev. Rachel Schwab will lead us in discussion around trauma-informed pastoral care. This 2-hour session is considered boundary training.