



A Monthly Update in the Life of our Church

May 2021

Contact

What will PCC post-Covid churches look like?

More shared ministries, more innovative worships, more community outreach?



Where is God calling worshipping Christians as Covid seems to ebb? More specifically, where is God calling the United Church of Christ, the Penn Central Conference and individual congregations? Hmm.

It's too soon to tell because we're not yet in a post-Covid world. And despite amazing progress with vaccinations and patient care, I'm not sure when we will arrive.

I hope to have more insights after Dr. Carrie Call, our conference minister, discusses the conference's future at the Harrisburg UCC Ministerium I chair on May 19.

Will some folks never return to live service; will congregants expect hybrid worship going forward?

While Redeemer's year-plus series of audio-visual recorded services won plaudits from within and outside the church, they were an incredible amount of work.

Even with the adept and expert collaboration and integrated creativity of Leadership Chair Kim Merkert, music director Mike Wojdylak and me, it was heavy lifting.

We ceased filming new recorded services in Lent. And our Leadership Team whole-heartedly agreed that continuing the series in its current form with live services on Sunday was impractical. It has worked so well

because stay-aways – my term for folks who by choice or out of necessity cannot return to the sanctuary on Sunday mornings - seem content with last year's recorded services.

As for the future, the conference has been discussing "shared ministries" for a number of years, but it's a challenging concept to initiate, implement and monitor.

How would that work? Well, instead of two small churches struggling to offer Summer Vacation Bible School, for example, could two nearby churches share resources?

The most common example of shared ministries is when two UCCs share one pastor. That arrangement allowed St. John's UCC in Fredericksburg to share its pastor, the Rev. Tony Fields, with Christ Church UCC in Annville.

A UCC could share its music ministry, Bible study or faith-discussion groups with another church and split the costs, for example, but that practice is rare and surprisingly complex.

It took me five weeks of calling, texting, emailing, consulting and coordinating to arrange the pulpit-swap in October 2019 with Trinity UCC/Palmyra.

This is all theoretical thinking; I have no suggestions for Redeemer. That is the church's domain.

Leadership Team and Worship and Music folks – quite a bit of overlap there – are encouraging creativity, but trying to be realistic about how much a small church can do.

We are currently mulling a three-part worship series linking Ascension Day (May 16) with Pentecost (May 23) and Trinity Sunday (May 30)

Kim, Mike, Nancy and I are re-envisioning how a non-traditional approach could work. The Bible has long been called "The Greatest Story Ever Told."

What if we presented the remarkable tale of Ascension Day as a live broadcast news program complete with a TV station anchor and reporter in the field?

Because Pentecost Sunday is ostensibly the most high-energy Sunday of the year, we need some help from congregants.

HINT: Remember the palm fronds you got March 28 to wave proudly in the sanctuary? We have a substitute: Faux flames on a stick! Whoa!

The jury is out on a non-traditional approach to Trinity Sunday. The action in the scripture that day is low-key compared to the previous two Sundays. Stay tuned!

Pastor Tom is the interim minister at Redeemer. His final day is June 13.



Redeemers Approve Call of Settled Pastor

Rev. Christina Fianza begins role on June 21

Church of the Redeemer UCC is proud to announce that members voted April 11 to approve Rev. Christina Fianza as its settled pastor.

Our search has been a long and purposeful process, and we are so very pleased with the outcome. We wish to acknowledge the tedious work of the Profile Committee who created a detailed glimpse into our church and its history; Pastor Thomas Caruso, Interim Pastor, for his spiritual guidance over the last nearly three years; guidance and leadership by the staff of the Penn Central Conference UCC; the scrutinizing work of the Search Committee in reviewing potential candidates; and finally, the membership for its approval of Pastor Christina. We rejoice in this day and look forward with optimism and excitement to new and exciting days ahead in the next chapter of life for our church. Pastor Christina will assume her position as settled pastor on June 21.



Pastor Christina Fianza and Kim Merkert



Pastor Christina Fianza



Redeemers and Guest on Call Sunday, April 11, 2021

Redeemer Spring Clean-up Scheduled for May 22

Grab your garden gloves and floppy garden hat and mark your calendar for Saturday, May 22 for Redeemer's Annual Spring Clean-Up Day. This is the day we gather to spruce up our property, pull some weeds, plant some flowers, spread some mulch and enjoy some fellowship together.

Our efforts will be led by George Kapp and Dave Stong, Redeemer's own Master Gardeners. Please reach out to them if you are able to attend.

If you like to get your hands dirty, please plan to join in the fun!

The Rain Date is set for Saturday, June 5th.

*Content suggestions, articles, and pertinent calendar dates for **CONTACT** are requested by the 20th of each month. Please reach out to Jorja in the Church Office for more information by calling 717-533-7300 or email at info@redeemerchurchucc.org.*

Thank you!



United Scrip Gift Card Program

Script gift card orders are collected and delivered once a month. Order forms are available in the rear of the sanctuary and in the pocket on the office door.

Please remember to add \$2.00 to your payment to cover Scrip postage and handling. Questions? Please reach out to Jan Stong.

Order Due Dates (Delivery)

May	12 (19)
June	9 (16)
July	14 (21)
August	11 (18)
September	8 (15)
October	13 (20)
November	10 (17)
December	8 (15)



Origin of Mother's Day

The present-day celebration of Mother's Day began in the year 1908 when Anna Jarvis organized a memorial for her mother, Ann Jarvis, a peace activist who used to care the wounded soldiers of the American Civil War. The event was held at the St Andrew's Methodist Church in Grafton, West Virginia, which currently holds the International Mother's Day Shrine. Anna Jarvis began the task of getting support for the celebration of Mother's Day in the United States in 1905 after her mother died the same year. She wanted to honor all the mothers of the world who have done a lot for their family and society.

Due to her continuous efforts, most of the US states by 1911 started celebrating Mother's Day as a local holiday and the West Virginia, the home state of Jarvis became the first state to declare the holiday for the occasion in the year 1910. Finally, the second Sunday of May was officially designated as Mother's Day in the USA and was declared as a national holiday after Woodrow Wilson, the 28th President of United States of America signed the proclamation in the year 1914. In this way, the present Mother's Day came into existence in the USA and the same date is also selected by countries like India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Italy, Singapore, Belgium, and a lot more other countries.

Why do we celebrate Mother's Day?

Mother's Day is an occasion which is celebrated in various parts of the world to express respect, honor, and love towards mothers. The day is an event to honor the contribution of mothers, acknowledge the efforts of maternal bonds and the role of mothers in our society. Although, different countries celebrate the occasion on different dates, the common months of the celebrations are March or May. Mother's Day is a similar effort like other celebrations like Father's Day, Siblings Day, Grandparents Day and others.

It is a day which makes people remember the importance and significance of mothers in their life and is observed as a day to give special emphasis to the motherly figures around the world. **Happy Mother's Day!**



Easy Spaghetti and Meatball Soup

- 4 cups chicken or beef broth
- 2 cups water
- 1 jar (24oz.) prepared spaghetti sauce
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 30-40 small precooked frozen meatballs, thawed
- 8 ounces spaghetti, broken into 2-inch pieces
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Instructions

In a large pot or Dutch oven, bring broth, water and spaghetti sauce to a simmer. Stir in garlic and Italian seasoning. Add meatballs and return to a simmer. Stir in spaghetti and simmer for an additional 10-12 minutes, or until spaghetti is tender. Stir in fresh basil and Parmesan cheese. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve with additional basil and Parmesan cheese for garnish, if desired.

This month's recipe favorite was submitted by Kim Merkert. Kim shared: "My girls have always been crazy for noodles. Pretty much any kind of noodles! A favorite dinner is spaghetti and meatballs with garlic bread, and LOTS of cheese. I was really happy to find this recipe for spaghetti soup a few years ago, because I can prepare it in the crockpot. I wasn't sure how the noodles would cook in the crockpot, but they do beautifully if I use angel hair pasta and break them into small pieces before adding to the pot.

This recipe became extra special because I was able to share it with the book study group during Soup for the Soul. Always a crowd pleaser, and easy...a perfect combination!

Too much cuteness with this memory photo of her little one enjoying her Easy Spaghetti and Meatball Soup! Thanks for sharing, Momma Merkert!





Prayers of Healing for

Bev Patton's daughter-in-law, **Suzanne**, who was admitted to the hospital last week
Barry Mongold, who has been undergoing radiation treatments
Charlie Goedken, friend of George Kapp, going through stem-cell injections to restore his sight
Randy Rupert, friend of Matt & Audrey Baker, who is undergoing treatment for throat cancer
Mike Wojdylak who is facing a cardiac medical procedure

Prayers of Comfort and Support for

The Stolfus Family, mourning the loss of their daughter **Linda**, but also relief that her body has been found. May they now begin to realize some sense of closure to their ordeal.
Kemmy Himmelberger who remains under Hospice Care at Country Meadows Nursing Home. Kemmy welcomes cards at Country Meadows, 451 Sand Hill Road, Hershey, PA 17033.

Prayers of hope and gratitude that Covid case numbers in Pennsylvania appear to be declining.
For individuals who have been able to return to employment and for the restaurant and hospitality industry that is gradually returning to some normalcy.

Prayers for Strength for first responders, the medical community, and our nation and our world as we continue to battle the Coronavirus, political strife and social injustice.

Special MAY Celebrations

Birthdays... Have a happy one!

- Lorna Davis
- Vonnie Brown
- Dan Hottenstein
- Adelaide Stong

Anniversaries...Congratulations!

- Dan & Pat Hottenstein
- Barry & Pam Mongold

Community Resource Corner Mission Central, Inc.

What is Mission Central?

Mission Central is a nonprofit registered with the IRS under section 501c3 and with the PA Bureau of Corporations and Charitable Organizations. Mission Central first opened in 2002 as a mission of the Central Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church, now known as the Susquehanna Conference. In 2020, the assets and operations of Mission Central migrated to a newly formed non-profit corporation, Mission Central, Inc. Although Mission Central, Inc. is now a separate entity, we retain a close affiliation and partnership with our friends at the Susquehanna Conference.

Our mission is "Connecting God's Resources with Human Need." This is accomplished by following three areas of focus: Mission Outreach, Mission Education and Disaster Response. By partnering with over 180 different organizations, we provide resources to groups who are doing humanitarian work locally, across the country and around the world. Additionally, we stand ready to respond to all weather-related disasters or emergencies that occur. Mission Central is one of six warehouses that provide the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), an organization that provides disaster relief and humanitarian aid to over 80 countries worldwide, with all of their needed resources used in disaster response efforts. Recently, we sent over 11,000 cleaning buckets and more than 45,000 hygiene kits to hurricane-affected areas in the United States, a value of around \$1.5 million. Our relief efforts are not limited to UMCOR...over half of the aid that we provide stays in Pennsylvania.

[Mission Central | Connecting God's Resources with Human Need](#)



MISSION CENTRAL

5 Pleasant View Drive
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050

Directions | Hours & Closings

News from Penn Central Conference

Members and friends of Penn Central Conference



"Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures..." (Luke 24:45a NRSV)

"For no one will ever be a good teacher if they do not show themselves to be teachable and always ready to learn." (John Calvin, Commentary on 1 Corinthians 14:31, edited for inclusivity)

The post-resurrection appearances of Jesus are filled with wonder, surprise, fear, pathos and hope. They also include teaching, which we may miss in all of the Easter glory. In the passage at the end of the gospel of Luke, Jesus appears and stands among the disciples, offering them peace. They were "startled and terrified" until he speaks again and shows them his wounds. In showing them his wounds, he literally opens himself physically to them, inviting them into his wounded self. Afterward, while they remain joyful and

disbelieving, he asks a basic question: "Have you anything here to eat?"

I admit that line always makes me laugh. The words are so wonderfully basic and simple. I can imagine the disciples fumbling to find the cooked fish and giving it to Jesus to eat as they watch in wonder. After this moment, the story transitions into teaching.

Jesus spends years teaching the disciples prior to his death and resurrection. Scriptures relate how they did not always understand his teachings, or they tried to stop what he was telling them. The lessons were too difficult or threatening to grasp at times. Their own preconceived notions created filters through which the teachings flowed and sometimes not everything got through. By the end of his life the disciples were perhaps better versed in some aspects of kingdom life, but they were not prepared for the final lesson.

In the post-resurrection stories, I see something different happening. The transformation of Jesus and the disciples' direct experience of his transformed presence casts everything they have learned previously into a new light. Now Jesus is able to "open their minds" to his teachings. The foundational claim of the gospel is presented to them "...repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations..." and the disciples grasp and retain it. The disciples are transformed in their encounter with Jesus and that encounter renders them teachable in a way they had not been previously. They take the teaching and run with it.

I think often about how my own encounter with Jesus has made me teachable. Studying psychology has taught me that human beings have an innate need to believe themselves to be correct. In other words, we hate being wrong. This shouldn't surprise any of us. But what does surprise me is how my relationship with Jesus constantly pushes me to question whether I am remaining teachable, or if I'm slipping into the comfort of certainty and dogmatism. The disciples were sure about certain things prior Jesus' death. His resurrection went against everything they thought they knew to be right. Yet their encounter with his new life opened their minds and they were able to receive his teaching in a new way. That teachable spirit allowed them to embrace the gospel (finally) and to make it the center of their lives, even unto death.

Our platitudes, deflections and intellectual certitudes always remain a temptation. How has your encounter with the risen Christ transformed your own mind? Have our spirits become teachable in light of Easter?

**Peace,
Carrie**

Rev. Dr. Carolyn Call
Conference Minister
Penn Central Conference



Leadership Team UPDATE

By Kim Merkert, Chair



The Leadership Team met on April 15 for its regular monthly meeting. After our opening activities, Audrey Baker discussed ideas for sharing the member outreach activities among the pastor and the leadership team. It is important to continue to reach out to our members who are not currently attending, so they know their church community misses them and cares about them.

Pastor Tom discussed his plan for weekly Wednesday emails to the congregation since we are no longer creating worship videos. Jorja will be choosing old videos to include in the emails. All of the old videos are still available via YouTube.

Prospective members will be welcomed as new church members during worship on Sunday, June 6. The worship and music team will plan Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, and the new members' service.

In response to a suggestion at the congregation meeting on Call Sunday, Redeemer will change the way the annual budget is presented to the congregation. The Leadership Team generally begins working on the new budget in October and finalizes the budget to be voted on at the December Leadership Team meeting, prior to presentation of the budget at the annual meeting later in December. With the change, after the Leadership Team prepares the budget, but before voting on it, we will present the budget to the congregation in a brief preview meeting in early November. The congregation will be able to provide feedback about the budget to the Leadership Team until the Sunday before the December Leadership Team meeting.

Leadership Team will, in good faith, consider the congregation input and decide if the suggestions can be implemented or not, prior to the Leadership Team vote. The final approved budget will be presented to the congregation as always at the December annual meeting. Jonathan presented his financial report and gave an update on the new financial software and outsourcing project. Pastor Tom presented his pastor's report, and we reviewed Jorja's written office administration report. New business included discussion about refurbishing the church sign out front when the new settled pastor's name is added. Also, at the next Leadership Team meeting in May, we will revisit our covid procedures to see if we need to update them. Mike informed the Leadership Team that May 9 will be his last Sunday before his medical procedure, and he plans to be off for approximately one month. Kim will substitute for him until he is ready to resume his music director activities.

Pastor Tom's last Sunday as our interim pastor will be Sunday, June 13. We are grateful for his faithful service to Redeemer during his time with us. Our new settled pastor, Pastor Christina Fidanza, will begin her ministry with Redeemer on Monday, June 21.

Our next Leadership Team meeting will be held a week earlier than usual, on Thursday, May 6 at 7pm. As always, please reach out to the Leadership Team if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.

Respectfully submitted,
Kim Merkert
Leadership Team Chair

Soup for the Soul Sessions Resume on May 10

The Soup for the Soul group will resume their lively and thought-provoking sessions on Monday, May 10, 7-9 pm, in the sanctuary.


Each session is gleaned from the Wired Word Curriculum, and includes biblical commentary, discussion, and reference resources that relate to a topic in the news whether it be national or something with a more global perspective. **Join us!**





CHURCH OF THE
REDEEMER
HERSHEY PA

MAY 2021

Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.
						1 7am Sunrise Saturday 12pm KISS
2 9:15 am Worship Communion 3 pm KISS	3 12pm Nooner 7:30pm OA SOUP?	4 12pm Nooner 12pm Hershey Ministerium Luncheon / St. Joan 6:30pm KISS	5 12pm Nooner 6:30pm KISS 6:30pm Bell Choir	6 12pm Nooner 12pm Focused Prayer 6:30pm KISS 7pm LT Meeting	7 12pm Nooner 6:30pm KISS	8 7am Sunrise Sat 12pm KISS
9  Happy Mother's Day! 9:15 am Worship 3 pm KISS	10 12pm Nooner 6:00pm Soup for the Soul 7:30pm OA	11 12pm Nooner 6:30pm KISS	12 12pm Nooner 6:30pm KISS 6:30pm Bell Choir	13 12pm Nooner 12pm Focused Prayer 6:30pm KISS	14 12pm Nooner 6:30pm KISS	15 7am Sunrise Sat 12pm KISS
16 9:15 am Worship Ascension Sunday 3 pm KISS	17 12pm Nooner 7:30pm OA	18 12pm Nooner 6:30pm KISS	19 10am Dr. Carrie at Harrisburg Ministerium 12pm Nooner 6:30pm KISS 6:30pm Bell Choir	20 12pm Nooner 12pm Focused Prayer 6:30pm KISS	21 12pm Nooner 6:30pm KISS	22 7am Sunrise Sat 9am-12pm Redeemer Clean- Up Day 12pm KISS
23 9:15 am Worship Pentecost Sunday Communion 3 pm KISS	24 12pm Nooner 7:30pm OA	25 12pm Nooner 6:30pm KISS	26 12pm Nooner 6:30pm KISS 6:30pm Bell Choir	27 12pm Nooner 12pm Focused Prayer 6:30pm KISS	28 12pm Nooner 6:30pm KISS <i>Pastor Tom is away May 28 through June 2 Noon</i> →	29 7am Sunrise Sat 12pm KISS
30 9:15 am Worship Trinity Sunday 3 pm KISS	31 Memorial Day OFFICE CLOSED 12pm Nooner 7:30pm OA →					

Church of the Redeemer UCC
500 W. Chocolate Avenue
Hershey, PA 17033

Volunteer Opportunities

REDEEMER MEALS ON WHEELS.... *We need YOU!*

Every Tuesday morning, Sharon Thomas and her Redeemer Team of Meals on Wheels Volunteers arrive at the Church around 8:30 AM to collect their delivery list of names. On average, we see that 45 seniors are provided with both hot and cold meals for the day, something most of us take for granted because food is easily accessible to us.

Dauphin County Area Agency on Aging manages the registration for this program. Our role is to simply see that those seniors who are signed up for the service reliably receive their meals for the day.

This is where **YOU** come in! Though we coordinate this service every Tuesday, you need not commit to delivering meals every week. One week a month works too!

Please consider this opportunity to provide a sorely needed service to the seniors in our community and join the Redeemer Meals on Wheels crew! You'll be glad you did!

For additional information on this opportunity, please reach out to Sharon Thomas at (717) 269-4856.



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Hershey, PA 17033
717-533-7300
www.redeemerchurchucc.org



Pastor Thomas W. Caruso
Interim
pastor@redeemerchurchucc.org
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Springtime at Founders Hall on the grounds of the Milton Hershey School

The May issue of CONTACT is sponsored by Dave and Jan Stong in honor of Chelsea, Nick, and Adelaide's birthdays.