

Covid-year blessings from our leaders

LT officers, LT members and staff guided us through deep waters

We now mark the 1st anniversary of Covid-19's impact in Pennsylvania.

That's when it rose from worrisome background noise to a full-throated pandemic of fear, death and chaos across the nation and world.

When our Leadership Team voted to close the church mid-March 2020, most of us felt the crisis would ebb in a month or two. Who knew?

We had no clue the virus, science and sanitary rules would become both baffling and contentious!

But not at Redeemer! The grace, wisdom, dedication and hard work of our Leadership Team, church members and staff prevailed.

At their steady and able hands, the church measured the ebb-and-flow of COVID-19 news and acted prudently.

Without missing a beat, LT Chair Kim Merkert inspired and led the crew to assemble supplies, protocols and practices to keep us safe from the basement to the roof. (Get off that ladder, Kim!) Jonathan Bell, treasurer, tackled its financial effect.

LT Vice Chair Lorna Davis and LT Secretary Jan Strong helped; other LT folks and members pitched in.

Sorry if I missed names. LT did their own thing admirably and only consulted me to ask about my comfort level.

Other than washing my hands and masking, I had nothing to do with the superb, pragmatic and fact-driven COVID-19 approach. A round of hand sanitizer on the house!

Thanks to the kind, dedicated, patient and professional focus of Kim and Music Director Mike Wojdylak, we stepped from the darkness of no worship to the light of praising God in recorded services.

Our first filmed service was Palm Sunday in the parlor; then at the back of the church. Then the front! In-person worship resumed July 5.

How did we navigate the filmed and live services without paid help, rampant tension, grievous mistakes and expensive A/V equipment? Simple: The outstanding, creative and spiritual-led work of Kim and Mike with back-up help from office administrator Jorja Barton.

Kim handled the filming, editing and posting of services- plus graphics and varied framing and effects; Mike and she handled the music. And more!

Oh, did I mention Kim getting the church profile posted, starting the search for a settled pastor *AND* navigating regular church business?

Mike did amazing things with music, such as transposing, transcription, transliteration and speaking in tongues! (Did I get that right?) Bravo, good and faithful servant, bravo!

And he and Kim are really a pleasure to work with; we had some friction, but that's normal and healthy considering all the obstacles, challenges and deadlines.

And Praise the Lord and Jonathan because the church is in better financial shape than in early 2020.

And praise God for my 1992-2002 job as finance editor and print page designer at a daily in metro-NYC.



newspaper page designer at a daily in metro-NYC.

Why? That helped me plan, design and block out services – both live and filmed. I had to think 'moving bodies' vs. a static, printed page!

While Jorja never filmed with us – get ready for her aria from 'Aida' - she deftly and graciously dealt with things known and unknown so we could focus on worship, church issues, outreach, etc.

Kim, Mike, Jorja and most leaders and members at church have the patience of saints. (Not sure that runs in my lineage!)

Many burned the midnight oil in the last year for the Glory of God. And continue to do so. Clearly, the energy of the Holy Spirit has been with us all this past 12 months.

None of us ever expected the long-term impact of Covid. But I never expected how so many folks would nobly rise to the challenge. We are so truly blessed here.

God is good. God is good. God is good all the time! We have so much to celebrate at Redeemer!

"As each received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace." 1st Peter 4:10

*Blessings,
Pastor Tom*

Leadership Team Update

By Kim Merkert, Chair



The Leadership Team met on February 11, 2021 for its regular monthly meeting. After our opening activities, we discussed the Treasurer's Report. Jonathan utilized a new format for his report that will be easier to create going forward.

We began a conversation about possible grants that Redeemer can apply for to help support some of the activities of the church. Some of the specific ideas we have for possibly finding grants are building security, Christian education, technology for outreach, and outreach to underserved populations in our community. In order to apply for grants or charitable donation programs, Redeemer would first need to obtain 501c3 non-profit status. We currently umbrella under the 501c3 status of the national UCC office in Cleveland, but this does not allow us to apply for grants. We will research the necessary steps to become a 501c3 and decide if this is something Redeemer should pursue. The process to obtain 501c3 status takes about a year.

We learned of a policy that another UCC church has in place for the acceptance of memorial contributions and discussed whether Redeemer should create similar guidelines. This is part of an ongoing discussion about how to honor people in our church community in memoriam after their passing. This discussion will continue in future months.

We had a request from a piano teacher to use our building for a recital. We have an ongoing relationship

with the teacher and have opened our building to her many times in the past for recitals. Unfortunately, at this time Leadership Team feels that we cannot safely allow a recital due to COVID-19 and the logistics that would be required for such an event. We will re-evaluate the request again toward the summer and fall.

We clarified our inclement weather policy for cancelling church if necessary. A decision will be made by 7am on Sundays when there is bad weather. If church is cancelled, it will be posted on CBS 21 and ABC 27.

After an abbreviated meeting, the officers and chair emeritus met to discuss some strategies we can incorporate to help support the treasurer roll at Redeemer. These suggestions came from a meeting with Ron Royer, who is the treasurer of the conference. The officers/emergitus will present our thoughts at the next Leadership Team meeting in March. We will have more information to share with the congregation after that meeting.

Our next Leadership Team meeting will be held on Thursday, March 11, 2021 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

MAMA Z'S SUGAR COOKIES *submitted by Nancy Kapp*



1 cup Crisco	4 cups (heaping) flour
2 cups sugar	1 tsp salt
3 eggs (medium)	1 tsp baking soda
1 tsp vanilla	1 cup sour cream



Cream together Crisco and sugar. Beat in eggs and vanilla. Sift together dry ingredients and add alternately with sour cream. Drop by rounded spoonfuls onto lightly greased baking sheets. Sprinkle with sugar. Bake at 350 for 9-11 minutes until lightly browned. Note: I prefer to make dough ahead of time and chill for several hours or overnight. If eggs are quite large, be sure to add more flour.

I have a vivid memory of my friend Susan Stare writing out this recipe for me at her kitchen table. At that time (probably 1975), our sons were babies, and she lived in the apartment downstairs from me. Many years later, one of my "field hockey daughters" requested soft sugar cookies for the game the next day. The team has never looked for any other recipe. Jamie's daughter now plays on the varsity team, an entire generation later. I cannot guess how many dozen cookies I have baked and the players have gobbled over the years. (One season I did add up the batches, coming to 66 dozen cookies!) These cookies have taken on a life of their own. Even referees at the state level playoffs ask for them, knowing the cookie container will be under the scorekeepers' table. At one state final game, the commentator talked about Mama Z's sugar cookies! For a number of years, I have baked them to be auctioned off at Lower Dauphin's Lend-a-Hand fundraising clinic. The record bid was over \$100, and Coach Kreiser shipped the batch to Connecticut to a former player. These confections have become "The Cookie of Champions." (Eat your heart out, Wheaties.)

Yum! Thanks for sharing your award-winning recipe, Nancy!

ASH WEDNESDAY




Images following our Ash Wednesday service on Feb. 17. (Photos courtesy of George Kapp)

Lenten Book Study

Soup for the Soul will meet on Mondays March 1 through April 5 in the sanctuary. Our study is centered on the book **Plenty Good Room** by Marilyn Thornton. The book is available on Amazon for \$9.79 + tax. All are welcome! Please reach out to Jan Stong, Nancy Kapp, or the office for more info. Please be sure wear a mask.

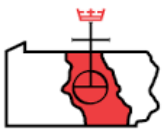


*Don't forget to turn your clocks **AHEAD** 1 hour before you go to bed on Saturday, March 13. Otherwise, you'll be late for church on Sunday, March 14!*

March

*Racing clouds and whistling winds,
Coats flapping in the breeze,
Bright kites circling in the skies,
The dance of swaying trees,
The cheerful sight of crocuses,
The first sweet breath of spring –
Just part of all the many moods
The month of March can bring.*





PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Dear Colleagues in Ministry –

Greetings in Peace. I am writing to share some information that you may find of interest. Several of you have expressed concerns regarding OCWM contributions and have wondered how the Conference is doing in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. We closed the books on 2020 in mid-January and I would like to share the results with you.

The pandemic had several direct effects on the Conference financial situation in 2020:

- We applied for and received a PPP loan that has been forgiven. We did not qualify for the second round.
- Our staff travel expenses were dramatically reduced.
- The decision was made to divest of the Hartman Center. While no camping season happened, we still had to pay UCCR for their management.
- Virtual meetings (such as Annual Meeting) cost much less than in-person gatherings.

In general, our financial situation is solid. This is due to strong OCWM giving alongside our decrease in expenses. Please see the graph and chart below for some visuals. We have compared five years so you can see trends. The bump in income in 2017 was due to a bequest (Wilbur Valentine). The bump in expenses the same year was due to a full staff and full expenses for that staff (travel, etc.). Our staff has since been reduced in size.

Please note the trend in OCWM giving. This reflects the decline in church membership as well as number of churches. This trend will continue. The Strategic Plan Task Force is engaging in active conversations about how to make projections into our future and consider how we will manage financial sustainability into the future.

How much a Conference draws on OCWM for its operational revenue depends on its endowment size and other sources of income. For Penn Central the reliance on OCWM is significant – 90% of our operating costs are covered by it. Some of our projects do receive support from special funds, but our Conference operations rely on OCWM.

I feel confident in our current financial condition and encourage you to feel confident as well. We have challenges ahead of us and yet I know we can rise to meet them – and we will adapt. Please continue your generous giving to the Conference as you are able – and know that we give thanks to God for your faithful witness in these days.

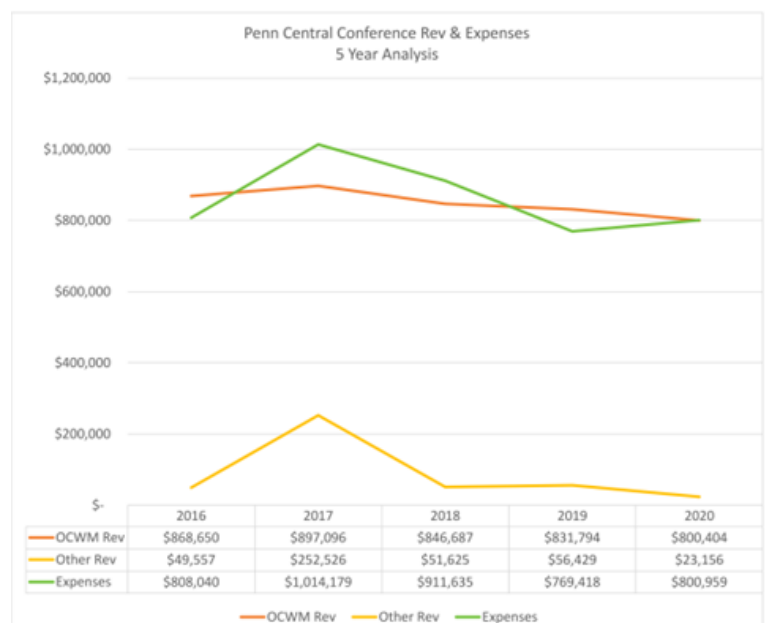


**Peace,
Carrie**

Rev. Dr. Carrie Call
Conference Minister
Penn Central Conference

Redeemer's Contributions to PCC During 2020

- Neighbors in Need \$ 270
- OCWM \$ 200
- One Great Hour of Sharing \$ 178
- Strengthen the Church \$ 120
- Veterans of the Cross Christmas Fund \$ 325
- **TOTAL Contributions to Conference \$1,093**





Weekly Virtual Services & Host Churches 12:00 Noon

The Hershey Area Ministerium seeks to respond to the needs of the local community and to provide ecumenical worship services. The Lenten offering is donated to several local social service organizations including The Hershey Food Bank and Community Outreach, Love INC, and Hope Within. Donations may be dropped off at any one of the host churches with checks made out to the "Hershey Ministerium".

Love INC: The mission of Love In the Name of Christ of Greater Hershey is to mobilize churches to transform lives and the community, doing so all in the Name of Christ. Primarily, Love INC does this through a centralized call center or Clearinghouse Ministry where needs are assessed, and resources matched. The Parsonage Ministry is a home away from home for families of adult patients at the Penn State Hershey Medical Center. The Mentoring Ministry provides one-on-one guidance to help with longer-term needs such as budgeting and chronic poverty resource issues. The Personal Care Closet Outreach provides personal, household, and baby basics not covered by food stamps. Educational classes for life skills and

transformational ministries are being developed. The communities of Hershey, Hummelstown and Elizabethtown are served. Please contact Love INC at 717-835-0101 to get involved or go to www.loveincgreaterhershey.org.

The Hershey Food Bank and Community Outreach is an all volunteer 501(c)(3) organization whose purpose is to serve the community by providing free food and assistance with the temporary needs of families in financial distress and emergency help to transients. Our goal is to help all who are in need and to stop hunger. Twice a month during the three days we are open, registered families have the opportunity to shop for their food needs as well as paper and personal care items. The food bank also makes available free budget counseling to any family in need of this service. Contact information: hersheyfoodbank@verizon.com or 717-520-3143. More information can also be found on our website: www.hersheyfoodbank.com

Hope Within: Hope Within was co-founded in 2002 by Brian & Donita Sturgis with the dream of providing primary health care to the uninsured low-income residents of Lancaster, Dauphin, and Lebanon Counties. Through the Grace of God, the organization is excited to Share His Love by offering excellent and free primary medical care, low-cost sliding-scale counseling and donation-based dental care via the hands of more than thirty volunteer medical, dental providers, therapists and nurses. Contact Hope Within at www.hopewithin.org or call 717-367-9797.

Weekly Worship Service Hosts

March 3

Hosted by Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
www.htluth.org

March 10

Hosted by Zion Lutheran Church – Hummelstown
www.zluth.org

March 17

Hosted by Church of the Redeemer UCC
www.redeemerchurchucc.org

March 24

Hosted by First United Methodist Church - Hershey
www.firstumchershey.org

March 31

Hosted by Spring Creek Church of the Brethren
www.springcreekcob.org



Prayers of Joy for Judy and Howard David, friends of the Kapps, celebrating 49 years of marriage



Prayers of Comfort for:

The Rev. Dr. Claude Dendler, whose son Barron, 47, died of cancer Jan. 14 in the Allentown area. Pastor Claude was the former senior minister at Hummelstown UCC

Prayers of Healing for:

Virginia Fleck who is struggling with sciatic nerve problems

Terry Thomas who fell and broke two ribs

The Rev. Dr. Bonita Zobeck, the former senior pastor at Colonial Park UCC in Harrisburg, who is struggling with cancer treatments in Michigan

Rev. Dr. John Afman, friend of Pastor Tom, who had an allergic reaction to the Covid vaccine

Kathleen Kirkwood, friend of Bev Patton, who has been diagnosed with Stage 2 cancer

Billy Paterwic, brother to Pastor Tom's best friend, who was diagnosed with cancer

Prayers of Support and Encouragement for:

The Residents of Texas. Thankfully **Nathan and Adrianna Davis'** power was restored this week.

Margie Crocker who has moved to Martinsburg, PA

Faye Witmer, Annette Mastrangelo's mother, recovered from Covid, but struggling with dementia

Kemmy Himmelberger who is struggling at Country Meadows Hershey. Please send cards to her at Country Meadows or her home.

Prayers for Strength for first responders, the medical community, and our nation as we continue to battle the Coronavirus, political strife and social injustice, particularly that addressed by **Black Lives Matter** leaders and advocates.



Easter Flower Orders Due by March 14

You know it is Spring when it's time to order Easter Flowers!

We will be ordering from Royer's Flowers. Due to Covid challenges, Daffodils, Hyacinths, and Cushion & Daisy Mums are offered. Order forms are located in the sanctuary and in the pocket bin on the office door.

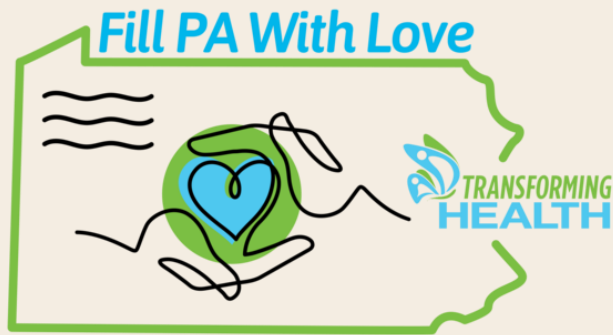
Please be sure to complete your order form and submit it to the office along with your remittance by Monday, March 14.

Flowers will be delivered to the church on April 2 and available for pickup following our Easter service on April 4.



March 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 12pm Nooner AA 7 pm Lenten Book Study 7:30 pm OA	2 12pm Nooner AA	3 12pm Nooner AA 6:30p KISS AA	4 12pm Nooner AA 12:00 pm Focused Prayer	5 World Day of Prayer 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm KISS AA	6 7:30am Sunrise AA 12pm KISS AA
7 9:15 Worship 3rd Sunday in Lent Communion 3pm KISS AA	8 12pm Nooner AA 7 pm Lenten Book Study 7:30 pm OA	9 12 pm Nooner AA	10 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm KISS AA Scrip Orders Due!	11 12pm Nooner AA 12:00 pm Focused Prayer 7pm Leadership Team	12 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm KISS AA	13 7:30am Sunrise AA 12pm KISS AA
14 Daylight Savings Begins 9:15 Worship 4th Sunday in Lent One Great Hour of Sharing 3pm KISS AA	15 12pm Nooner AA 7 pm Lenten Book Study 7:30 pm OA	16 12 pm Nooner AA	17 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm KISS AA Scrip Order Delivery	18 12pm Nooner AA 12:00 pm Focused Prayer	19 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm KISS AA	20 7:30am Sunrise AA 12pm KISS AA
21 9:15 Worship 5th Sunday in Lent 3pm KISS AA	22 CONTACT CONTENT DEADLINE!! 12pm Nooner AA 7 pm Lenten Book Study 7:30 pm OA	23 12pm Nooner AA	24 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm KISS AA	25 12pm Nooner AA 12:00 pm Focused Prayer	26 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm KISS AA	27 7:30am Sunrise AA 12pm KISS AA
28 9:15 Worship 6th Sunday in Lent 3pm KISS AA	29 12pm Nooner AA 7 pm Lenten Book Study 7:30 pm OA	30 12pm Nooner AA	31 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm KISS AA	<i>Special March Celebrations</i> <i>Happy Birthday to Dave Stong & Shellie Beers</i> <i>Happy Anniversary to Dick and Shirley Conrad</i>		



WHAT IS FILL PA WITH LOVE?

Our community needs our love more than ever right now! Help fight the winter blues and shower someone with inspiring words of comfort and support. Together, we can fill Pennsylvania with love. The program is sponsored by WITF, WellSpan, and Capital Blue



To participate, visit [Fill PA With Love | TransformingHealth.org](http://FillPAWithLove.TransformingHealth.org) and fill out the form to request a card collection that can be used to write personal notes of encouragement for friends you know already and for those you haven't met yet. Cards are already posted with stamps. Some of the postcards will come pre-addressed, some will not. Send the blank cards to a loved one in your life who might need a little extra support and encouragement. Pre-addressed cards will be delivered to someone that could use a little sunshine. *Transforming Health* has partnered with over 15 local skilled-nursing facilities, shelters and Meals and Wheels organizations in our region; their staff will distribute your postcard to someone who could use a smile!



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Pastor Tom Caruso, Interim
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This month's issue of CONTACT is sponsored by Dick & Shirley Conrad in honor of their 64th Wedding Anniversary.