

Welcome to The Penn Central
Conference of United Church
of Christ...

**“Where We Passionately Declare and Demonstrate
the Courageous Love of Christ!”**

A Profile of The Penn Central Conference

Welcome to the Profile of the Penn Central Conference of the United Church of Christ!

We are glad that you are taking the time to consider the possibility of becoming a part of the leadership team of our Penn Central Conference.

As you look more deeply into our profile we hope that you will begin to discover a little more about who we are and the mission of our conference...to be **congregations that passionately declare and demonstrate the courageous love of Christ!**

As a conference, we have been on the forefront of emphasizing congregational vitality as an essential ministry and we plan to continue this emphasis with even more intentionality. If you are a visionary, strategic-thinking leader who has a deep passion for the local church and the leadership of local congregations, we hope that you will be interested in finding out more about our churches, our people and the beauty of our communities. From its cities, towns, and lively suburban areas to its plentiful farmlands and the colorful mountainous regions, Central Pennsylvania has a rich history of hardworking people who have learned to balance tradition while still moving ahead into the future.

We encourage you to read more about the strengths and gifts our Conference has now and our hopes and dreams to build on ... and then, prayerfully consider if this is the place God wants YOU to be in ministry.

We look forward to hearing from you.

In Faith and Trust, we are the Search Committee for the Associate Conference Minister for Congregational Discernment.

Rev. William LaSalle, Chairperson

Linda Vignati, Secretary

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Who we are...

We are 183 **congregations in covenant**, with over 31,800 members – located in 20 counties journeying together in faith.



We are over **350 authorized ministers** serving in various ministry settings, located in urban, suburban, small town and rural areas in Central PA from NY to MD.



We are a people of a rich history rooted in the **blessed past** of our **German Reformed Heritage** breaking new grounds to a **bold future!**

We are a **diverse** community of **geographical** and **theological spectrums** gathered together from eight associations (Central, Gettysburg, Harrisburg, Lancaster, Lebanon, Mercersburg, Northern, York).



We are a people who are not afraid to ask hard questions of ourselves and each other, so that ultimately we may live out **our vision** where the **love of Christ is declared** and **demonstrated with passion and courage!**



Vision

United in Christ's Love we are:

CONNECTED to God, neighbor and each other

ENGAGED in serving the needs and ensuring justice in our community and the world

TRANSFORMED by Christ's love to create a better future for all creation to flourish

Mission

As the Penn Central Conference—**where congregations passionately declare and demonstrate the courageous love of Christ**—we have been on the forefront of emphasizing congregational vitality as an essential ministry. We feel that Penn Central Conference and the United Church of Christ can only be healthy if we seek to nurture healthy congregations. Our mission sharpens our focus on our congregations as each is encouraged to discern the unique ministry to which God is calling it. Our mission challenges us to seek excellence in ministerial and lay leadership.

Our mission calls us to lovingly challenge members in every congregation to grow as disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our mission impels us to foster a stronger sense of covenant between churches, Associations, the Conference, and the whole family of the United Church of Christ. Our mission summons us to put into practice good governance, collaborative staff ministries, and the sharing of resources as we strive for excellence in ministry together, for that alone will be praiseworthy.

From the recent intensive self-study process we know that the priorities that will move our mission forward are:

- Equip churches with strategies to reach new members.
- Work with churches that are struggling.
- Equip churches to help members become growing and vital disciples.
- Help churches become more responsive to issues, i.e. pastoral transitions or financial issues.
- Equip churches to be more effective addressing issues of the surrounding community.

History

We, the 183 Penn Central Conference member churches with over 31,800 members of diverse theological understandings, are the local presence of the United Church of Christ with deeply embedded roots in the German Reformed Church of our UCC. We are communities gathered together, informed by the heritage of the creative spirit of William Penn and his experiment in religious tolerance and shaped by our German Reformed heritage and the deep-rooted Mercersburg Theological movement of the mid-nineteenth century that emerged from our very own Lancaster Theological Seminary. This unique part of the conference's history, "Mercersburg Theology," has greatly influenced the Reformed Church. Largely under the teaching of John Nevin and Philip Schaff at the Seminary, the movement emphasized the organic unity of the church, ecumenism, church liturgy and the sacraments. This continues to influence the worship and witness of congregations within the conference.

Our Conference was officially constituted on September 18, 1962 and is comprised of the former Mercersburg, Lancaster, and Susquehanna Synods of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, and the Conference of Congregational Christian Churches lying within the geographical boundaries of the Penn Central Conference. We are people incorporated into thriving cities, small towns, rural farming communities, growing suburban areas, and beautiful mountainous regions. We look to find unity and blessing in all our diversity– located within 20 counties throughout Central Pennsylvania.

Ministry

Our core values stand in sacred covenant with our denomination, the United Church of Christ. At the heart of our ministry we are called to change lives for Christ. We change lives through our congregations, our outdoor ministries, global partnerships, missionaries and advocacy. We strive to offer an extravagant welcome and we extend this extravagance to people in our own communities and around the world through disaster recovery, sustainable development and refugee relief. We are a people of continuing Testament - that's our church's wider mission. We are called to speak with a clear voice and to welcome those who are searching for a church like ours.

Governance and Staffing

Penn Central Conference is in covenant with its eight associations of churches within our conference. We organize our community under a Board of Directors, responsible for overall policy and administration. We come together every June for Annual Meeting to share in the spirit, vision and business of the conference. Currently our Board of Directors consists of its officers (President, Moderator, Assistant Moderator, Secretary and Treasurer) and three delegates from each association (two lay and one clergy). The Board is then broken up into three committees: Strategic Planning Committee, Finance Committee and Personnel Committee.



The Board is assisted by two types of Commissions, elected and delegate, which oversee the program and procedures of our Conference and a number of ministry teams.

The Elected Commissions include the following:

- Communications: disseminates information and promotes Conference ministries
- Judicial: interprets and reviews Bylaws, renders opinions on referred matters
- Hartman Center Advisory Council: supports and promotes outdoor ministry programming.
- Theological: provides forums for exploring theological and ecumenical issues

The Delegate Commissions include the following:

- Commission on Ministry: coordinates standing, support and discipline of clergy and congregations
- Nominations: nominates persons to Conference, General Synod and other groups

Our conference is currently served by the following staff positions:

A **Conference Minister and President** is pastor, spiritual leader, chief executive and administrative officer. The Conference Minister also represents the Conference and its vision to various constituencies including the national setting of the United Church of Christ and the ecumenical church and judicatories in this region.

An **Associate for Congregational Discernment** (the position we are seeking to fill) is a full time position responsible for the Search and Call process of Penn Central Conference. Seeing beyond the traditional ideas of placement, this person helps congregations identify their unique ministry opportunities and gifts for ministry so as to answer the question, “How will your congregation passionately declare and demonstrate the courageous love of Christ?” The search for new pastoral leadership is then a part of the discernment process. Working to identify and support interim ministers is also a responsibility.

An **Associate for Ministerial and Congregational Excellence**, is a full time position involved with “Authorization for Ministry” issues within the Conference. This involves working with Association Committees on Ministry relating to Members in Discernment, Periodic and Fitness reviews as needed. Congregations may also benefit greatly from Situational Support Consultations.

An **Associate for Congregational Vitality**, has been a full-time position helping congregations answer essential questions as they focus on possibilities for vitality in their local settings.

A Part-Time **Coordinator of Camps/Retreats/ Youth Ministry**. United Camps Conferences and Retreats (UCCR) manages Hartman Center, our camping and retreat property located at Milroy, PA. The Coordinator enables Hartman Center to be a place where memories are made and outdoor ministries thrive.

A Part-Time **Facilitator of Care to Clergy and Clergy Families**. The facilitator recruits, trains, and relies on volunteers to respond to issues of clergy or clergy family care.

Our **Office Staff** includes an Office Manager, Administrative Assistant and Director of Communications and Generosity.

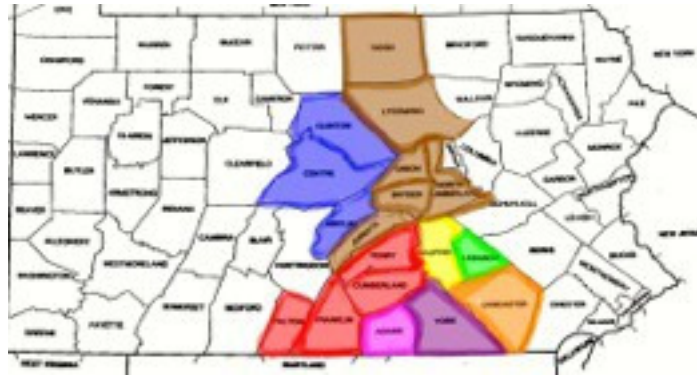


Our Gifts



Local Churches

Pennsylvania has the greatest number of UCC churches and the greatest number of UCC members of any state in the country. Within the Penn Central Conference, there are eight regional Associations, each with its own character and special gifts. Like the patchwork pieces of the quilts which are part of the area's cultural heritage, the Associations bring a diversity of cultural background and geographic setting that combine into one Conference richly blessed with resources and a variety of perspectives.



The Northern Association is located in the mountainous far northwest corner of the Conference. There is a feeling of family within and among its 18 churches, most of which are small and rural congregations scattered along its valleys. Hartman Center, our church camp, is located here. Penn State University, also located here, adds a mix of collegiate culture to the otherwise rural character of the Association.



The Mercersburg Association includes 23 congregations spread over 4 counties in the southwestern section of the conference. The UCC-affiliated Mercersburg Academy is located here, serving approximately 440 students in grades nine through 12. The student population is drawn from 25 states and 25 countries, adding a cosmopolitan mix to the culture of the area. On this site, Marshall College was founded in 1836. In 1837 the Reformed Theological Seminary was located in Mercersburg and remained until relocating to Lancaster in 1871.

The Gettysburg Association is comprised of 21 churches located in Adams and the southwest corner of York counties. Hanover is the largest town and is known as the snack food capital of the world. The second largest town is Gettysburg which is located adjacent to the National Battleground Park. Industries include tourism and fresh & processed fruit and poultry products. The area has many golf courses, a ski area and a growing wine industry.



The York Association has 27 churches and includes both city and rural churches. The area boasts many opportunities for education and the arts at places like York College, Penn State-York and the Strand-Capital Center. Association churches have many opportunities to serve Christ together.



The Lancaster Association is formed by 23 churches located in Lancaster County. Lancaster Theological Seminary is also located within this association. A large number of retired clergy and faculty are active in congregations of the Association.

The Lebanon Association of the United Church of Christ consists of 20 small to medium sized churches nestled in Pennsylvania's "Lebanon Valley." Four of these churches are located within the city of Lebanon and the remaining churches surround the city. Many of the neighbors to these churches are persons of the Mennonite or Brethren or Amish background. Even though Lebanon Association churches are made up predominantly of folks who refer to themselves as PA Dutch, today the churches are also blessed with many newcomers, people of every faith and background.



The Harrisburg Association includes 14 churches located in Dauphin County and Cumberland County. Even though the Association is divided north from south by a large ridge called Peter's Mountain, and "East shore" from "West shore" by the Susquehanna River, Harrisburg Association's churches and clergy enjoy excellent fellowship and collegiality.

The Central Association is located in the north central part of the Conference. It includes 37 congregations, with many located in rural areas and two located in college towns. The Association is active in ministry and maintains a Resource Center for congregations.

The cultures and traditions of the Penn Central Conference thus have the gift of crossing many theological spectrums from very conservative to very liberal and everywhere in between. Finding unity in this diversity can be challenging but we, as a Conference, strive to live out purpose together to be a place ... "Where We Passionately Declare and Demonstrate the Courageous Love of Christ!"

Church Vitality

In 2008 we began an intentional focus on Church Vitality. Lay leaders and clergy along with several congregations within our conference looked at various ways to become more vital churches. Seeing much success with these initial steps, the work of vitality continues.



Outdoor Ministries

Penn Central Conference has long embraced the significance of outdoor ministries in the lives of campers and many have heard Christ's call to discipleship and have been led to ordained ministry through their experiences. Hartman Center, our church camp located in Milroy, has been a channel for spiritual exploration in God's creation since 1933. It is managed by United Camps, Conferences, and Retreats (UCCR). The Hartman Center Committee of the Board of Directors ensures strategic direction, communication and coordination of Hartman Center services.



Open and Affirming

The Penn Central Conference Open and Affirming Ministry Team is a group of interested individuals and congregational representatives who promote and encourage civil discussion about the Open and Affirming process and its related issues. We have 19 churches in our conference who are now ONA.



Disaster Response and Readiness

The Disaster Response and Readiness Ministry Team plans and executes Conference-wide mission trips to places such as Florida, New Orleans, and Nashville. They also provide training in Disaster Readiness, working cooperatively with local and regional government entities, and encouraging each congregation to have a Readiness Plan.



Creation Justice

The Creation Justice Team are people of faith responding to God's call to promote environmental stewardship and justice through the Penn Central Conference of the United Church of Church and to assist our churches to become Creation Justice Congregations. We recently passed a resolution urging congregations to eliminate the use of Styrofoam.

Lancaster Theological Seminary



As a Conference, we are blessed to have the Lancaster Theological Seminary within our geographical boundaries. A seminary of the United Church of Christ, LTS is a richly diverse and dynamic graduate school of theology with a mission to educate and nurture leaders to join in God's redemptive and liberating work so that all creation may flourish.

Our clergy (whether alum or not), lay leaders, and youth within our Conference benefit from the many programs offered by the seminary. The seminary promotes a spirit of learning and connection to the entire Conference.

Dakota Partnership

This partnership team is charged by the Conference with maintaining a partnership community between the people of our churches and the people of the Dakota Association, a Native American (Lakota) association of churches on the Standing Rock and Cheyenne River Reservations in South Dakota and some adjacent areas. The partnership sends educational and work mission teams to the reservation communities, sponsors educational work at the Eagle Butte Learning Center, and seeks ways to encourage personal interactions between our Pennsylvania churches and the Lakota community.

Namibia Partnership

Penn Central Conference has enjoyed a partnership with the Namibian Synod of the United Congregational Church of South Africa since 1999. We have exchanged visitors from our churches over the years, have partnered with different congregations in a "Twinning" program, and have supported each other in prayer and outreach on a variety of levels including our outdoor ministry programs.

UEK Partnership

The Penn Central Conference has a formal partnership with the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland and the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg. This is done through mutual participation in colloquies and periodic official visits promoting knowledge and relationships. The UEK Ministry Team also provides workshops at Conference Annual Meeting to engage congregations in understanding this partnership and responds to inquiries from German churches/pastors.

Our Mission Partners

Hoffman Home for Youth: A comprehensive psychiatric care facility for emotionally and behaviorally troubled children and their families (www.hoffmanhomes.com)

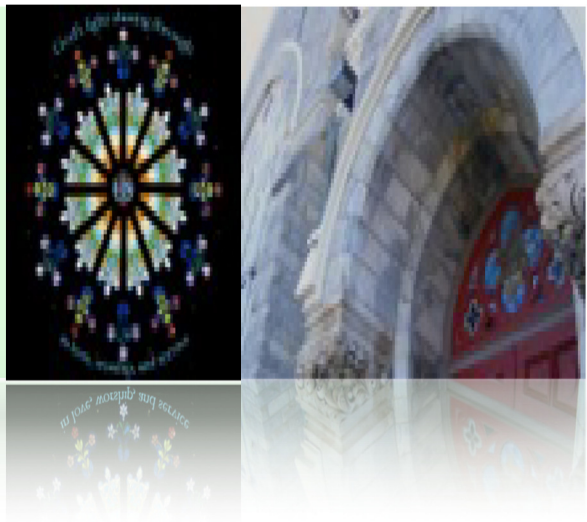
Bethany Children's Home: A residential home for children located in Womelsdorf, PA (www.bethanyhome.org)

Phoebe Ministries: A multi-facility organization specializing in health care, housing and support services for older persons throughout eastern and central Pennsylvania. (www.phoebe.org)

Lancaster Theological Seminary: A UCC related seminary (www.lancasterseminary.edu)

UCC Homes: Provides care and service to elders through acts of love and compassion (www.ucc-homes.org)

Statistical Overview



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

ELEVEN YEAR CONFERENCE PROFILE BASED ON DATA REPORTED IN UCC YEARBOOKS



Conference: Penn Central

Association: (Any)

YEAR	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	CONFIRMATION	CONFESSION	TRANSFER OR REAFFIRM	DEATHS OR TRANS OUT	OTHER LOSSES	NET MEMBS ADDS-REMOVED
2007	45702	14807	7180	316	160	697	984	1564	-1375
2008	43964	14972	8561	230	148	609	872	1821	-1706
2009	43509	14586	8436	216	88	402	813	499	-606
2010	42328	14506	6190	197	96	373	809	673	-816
2011	40739	13921	5760	224	95	349	827	830	-989
2012	39146	13291	5399	135	81	326	788	849	-1095
2013	38380	12866	5260	158	75	359	753	456	-617
2014	36439	12319	5509	142	108	399	867	645	-863
2015	34977	11773	4825	203	82	483	841	576	-649
2016	33553	11452	5124	124	45	366	625	1148	-1238
2017	31678	11016	4913	126	100	417	722	1188	-1267

YEAR	CURRENT EXPENSES	CAPITAL PAYMENTS	BASIC SUPPORT	TOT OTHER UCC GIVING	TOTAL OCWM	OTHER GIFTS	WIDER MISSION	BASIC SUPP% CURR LOCAL	TOTAL EXPEND	PLEDGES AND OFFERINGS
2007	\$22,715,015	\$1,505,652	\$1,017,037	\$872,954	\$1,889,991	\$842,503	\$2,732,494	4.48	\$26,953,161	\$17,120,071
2008	\$23,360,740	\$1,504,191	\$1,064,619	\$671,770	\$1,736,389	\$639,974	\$2,376,363	4.56	\$27,241,294	\$15,614,802
2009	\$23,659,057	\$1,037,099	\$980,747	\$805,365	\$1,786,112	\$621,459	\$2,407,571	4.15	\$27,103,727	\$14,234,083
2010	\$23,705,360	\$922,149	\$957,312	\$874,939	\$1,832,251	\$679,199	\$2,511,450	4.04	\$27,138,959	\$14,280,711
2011	\$24,252,961	\$976,918	\$904,880	\$678,783	\$1,583,663	\$623,882	\$2,207,545	3.73	\$27,437,424	\$14,469,761
2012	\$24,768,282	\$1,222,271	\$884,194	\$776,061	\$1,660,255	\$706,519	\$2,366,774	3.57	\$28,357,327	\$14,995,564
2013	\$24,119,198	\$1,207,841	\$875,230	\$642,630	\$1,517,860	\$669,369	\$2,187,229	3.63	\$27,514,268	\$14,179,819
2014	\$24,235,348	\$1,188,111	\$850,663	\$842,800	\$1,693,463	\$728,772	\$2,422,235	3.51	\$27,845,694	\$16,701,056
2015	\$24,362,543	\$907,053	\$818,971	\$714,313	\$1,533,284	\$759,822	\$2,293,106	3.36	\$27,562,702	\$16,379,701
2016	\$24,587,534	\$1,491,976	\$767,462	\$983,894	\$1,751,356	\$620,888	\$2,372,244	3.12	\$28,451,754	\$12,120,613
2017	\$24,645,322	\$1,125,358	\$806,218	\$577,086	\$1,383,304	\$852,781	\$2,236,085	3.27	\$26,881,407	\$15,152,151

% CHANGE	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	TOTAL ADDITIONS	TOTAL REMOVALS	CURR LOCAL EXPENSES	TOTAL OCWM	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
	-19.08	-17.12	-9.00	18.63	16.68	-0.50	-16.68	-5.20
	-30.69	-25.60	-31.57	-45.18	-25.04	8.50	-26.81	-0.27

Central Pennsylvania



Penn Central Conference covers 20 counties in central Pennsylvania between the New York and Maryland state lines. This large geographical area is characterized by diversity. There are farming communities and small towns, townships and metropolitan areas, suburbs and college towns. There are areas which have been relatively isolated by their geography and remain culturally homogeneous. There are other areas that have experienced shifts resulting from changes in the cultural mix of the population. And there are larger communities that are becoming increasingly diversified with the passage of time.



The area of central Pennsylvania offers a rich variety of cultural events and recreational opportunities. There is literally something for everyone. There is the Farm Show in Harrisburg every January, traditionally a week of bad weather which fails to dampen the enthusiasm of the thousands of visitors. There is college football at Penn State, American Hockey League action in Hershey, Little League World Series games in Williamsport, and a host of other sporting events. There is hiking on the Appalachian Trail and a variety of venues for hunting and fishing. There are art and craft shows, plays, concerts, parades and all manner of local celebrations. There is the majesty of the State Capitol building in Harrisburg, the solemnity of the Battlefield of Gettysburg, and the peaceful beauty of the rolling hills of the rural countryside.



Our area is one that attracts visitors. There are thriving tourist industries in Gettysburg and also in Lancaster, home of the Amish community. Our area also affords the opportunity for easy travel to the major metropolitan areas of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington DC, home to world-class museums and rich treasures of culture. And we are a half-day away from the sparkling waters and sandy beaches of the Delaware, New Jersey and Maryland seashore communities.



With all of the resources that are available to us in central Pennsylvania, there is ample opportunity for personal and spiritual enrichment and development through education in a variety of contexts. It is truly a place to pursue the lifelong pilgrimage of becoming the persons whom God created us to be.

Position Description



PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST POSITION DESCRIPTION

Associate Conference Minister (ACM) for Congregational Discernment

The Associate Conference Minister for Congregational Discernment will assist and guide congregations through a discernment process to bring clarity to the type of pastoral leadership needed for the congregation to fulfill its vision and mission.

This position is elected by the Board of Directors and supervised by the Conference Minister.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- An ordained minister of the United Church of Christ with standing in an Association of the UCC, having an enthusiastic commitment to the Christian faith
- Have direct experience in the search and call process with a fluent working knowledge of the Manual on Ministry and the recommendations of MESA (Ministry, Excellence, Support and Accountability Team)
- Have a record of achievement and credibility in local church ministry with ability to preach and lead worship
- Able to reflect appreciatively and analytically on the best practices of pastoral transitions both from the perspective of the local congregation and the clergy
- Be comfortable with indirect success and value doing ministry as a team member with other staff
- Be emotionally mature, self-differentiated, with a deep faith.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Search and Call (90%)

1. Within 24 hours of receiving notice that a ministerial vacancy is officially announced establish contact with the local church leadership to:
 - a. Establish a time to meet with the governing body to explain the opportunities and challenges that accompany pastoral transitions. Invite Association leadership to participate in the initial meeting.
 - b. Introduce the options for entering into a process of congregational discernment
2. Coach congregational leaders (and interim pastors) in the design and implementation of effective transitional process tailored to that particular congregation
 - a. Assist congregation with finding supply/bridge/interim pastors. Provide copy of Conference Pulpit Supply list (and a copy of the Association supply list)
 - b. Plan to preach on the 1st Sunday after the pastor leaves, and meet with the Consistory/Council to discuss the process
 - c. Coach congregation on formation of the profile and search committees
 - d. Review completed local church profile and provide feedback prior to posting on the National Ministry Opportunity Page
 - e. Forward ministerial profiles to search committees

- f. Assist with coordinating neutral pulpits
 - g. Coordinate with congregation and Association Committee on Ministry to prepare final call documents for election of new Pastor
3. Discern and develop a recruiting strategy for the Conference
 4. Recruit and train Search and Call associates in each of the Associations to serve as resources to congregations during times of transition
 5. Create monthly reporting that reflects current and forecasts anticipated pastoral transitions that enhances a strategic approach to the search and call process for the Conference
 6. Do an evaluation of the Search and Call Process with each congregation served, approximately one year after the placement of a settled pastor
 7. Encourage and coach local congregations on the importance of creating pastoral relations committees (PRC). This committee can enhance the relationship between the congregation and its authorized ministers in their mutual ministry together. and foster a healthy ministry
 8. Serve as the Conference liaison between the pastoral search committees and MESA
 9. Share in the work of validating all UCC ministerial profiles

Discernment (5%)

1. Encourage congregations that have not been in transition for at least 5 years to engage in the discernment process to clarify the vision and ministry in which they are engaged
2. Work with churches in transition to discern opportunities for cooperative (shared) ministry or leaving a legacy in the event of closure
3. Assist with counseling MIDs and authorized ministers expressing interest in Penn Central Conference while discerning their call

Pastoral Support (5%)

1. Create and facilitate a community of support and skill development for interim, designated and supply pastors
2. Coach pastors in the transition process to have the attitudes and skills for managing transitions with clarity and wisdom that will create a healthy time of departure for the congregation they are leaving and a positive personal perspective for the situation they are entering.
3. Share in the work of pastoral support throughout the Conference

How to Apply

To apply please have your completed profile sent to:

Attention: Associate Conference Minister Search Committee, c/o Chairperson Rev. William LaSalle

Via: whepler@pccucc.org

Penn Central Conference UCC
 900 South Arlington Avenue # 227A
 Harrisburg, PA 17109