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Changing Lives

Penn Central Conference



August 2011

www.pccucc.org

Attendees to General Synod Experience Changed Lives

The United Church of Christ's General Synod is currently held every two years and is the national gathering of the UCC for business, education, fellowship and connections. From June 30-July 5, over 3000 people gathered in Tampa, Florida to "Imagine What's Possible" during the 28th General Synod. Penn Central Conference had over 75 delegates, staff and visitors in attendance. Attending General Synod changes lives. How did this General Synod impact the lives of those from Penn Central Conference?

"General Synod is like a great canvas on which the UCC is rendered in all its forms and fancies. It authenticates our unity through diversity. It was a spiritual awakening to the infinite possibilities that God offers to a weary world uniquely through us. I am energized for the future as I look

toward retirement from the military and closer involvement with the UCC." **Jeffrey Dull**, Chaplain, Col, US Air Force (standing in Mercersburg Association)

"The story teller at the Honored Laywomen's Luncheon was life changing to me to the point that I wish to seek ways that I could be a story teller, whether it be through workshops or classes – she was awesome and I'd like to have that ability to share stories as she did!" **Kay Boyer**, Quentin UCC, Penn Central Conference Honored Laywoman

"Because of Synod, and the inspiration I received there, I am imagining what's possible in Pennsylvania through our four conferences working together!" **David Tietje**, St John's, Red Lion, Visitor

"It's too easy to become complacent and Synod has really encouraged me to stay aware of what's behind issues and challenges. The other evening the owner of a Papa John's Franchise approached us about using some of our parking lot for its customers. I asked them if Papa John's tomato products are from farms where the workers are treated properly and aid fairly. I'm not sure that I would have asked that without being reminded at General Synod." **Carol Bender**, Christ, Elizabethtown, Delegate

"General Synod made we realize that there is a strong youth element to our church and this is important for our church to move into the future." **Carole Hostetter**, Quentin UCC, Delegate

Learn more about General Synod. Invite one of your association's delegates to speak at your church. The list of delegates can be found at www.pccucc.org under the calendar, click on General Synod.



Members and friends of Penn Central Conference gather for dinner at Synod.

What are your stories? How is your local church changing lives?

Have you started something in your church that is attracting new people? Is the mission work of your church changing your community? How are you changing lives in your part of Penn Central Conference? We want to hear from you. We'll feature some of these stories in this publication "Changing Lives or on our website. Contact Brenda Waleff, Minister of Communications with your stories and ideas. bwaleff@pccucc.org or 717-652-1560.

Changing Lives



After two days of workshops, business and a presentation by NPR's Michele Norris, attendees of Penn Central Conference's 2011 Annual Meeting in June caught the theme of *"Changing Lives...Imagine What's Possible."* On Saturday evening, everyone was asked to complete a postcard on how God was calling their congregation and themselves personally to change lives. Each individual was asked to covenant with God, our conference and their local church that they would go back and work on chang-

Annual Meeting 2011 Attendees Covenant to Change Lives

ing lives. The cards were given as an offering to God that evening. In July, the conference mailed each person's postcard back to them in hopes that it would be a reminder of what they had covenanted to do at annual meeting. Here are some of the ways attendees felt they and their congregation were called to change lives:

Testify and lead prayer vigils outside of the church

Minister to the youth and children in our church and neighborhood by providing a "safe place" after school

To personally invite others to our church without fear.

To covenant with other area churches to consider sharing of resources..

To get out in the community and make our presence known.

Have people share how they are changing lives during worship each week..

To be aware of opportunities to share and speak about my faith to at least two people each week.

To develop my church as a Red Cross Relief location.

To continue to do social justice ministry/ programs in our church.

To introduce a program on organ donation to my congregation.

To share what I have learned about conference activities with my church so they understand the wider church.

Continue prayer team meetings each week and pray for people I see along my way each day.

Support OCWM to change lives in the conference and throughout the UCC.

So how is God calling you and your congregation to change lives? Take some time to pray and then share your thoughts with your congregation.

What Does OCWM Mean? The third and final in a series of columns

By Ken Heasley

OCWM. We have been exploring in the past two issues that these four letters can mean several things but. OCWM means **OUR CHURCHES WIDER MISSION.** This is the vehicle through which we change lives as youth experience church camp; as new churches are planted, as grieving persons are comforted, as hopeless individuals find a community of grace, as churches are strengthened.

OCWM—the way we work together to do as Christ taught: going into all the world with ministries of healing, educating, peace making, and hopefulness.

OCWM – the gifts individuals and churches forward to the Conference take us beyond the confines of our local building to change lives and to change the world, one person at a time.

OCWM- Our Commitment Will Matter! The next time you see these letters, rejoice in all the good things YOU help make happen.

Gifts to **Our Churches Wider Mission** is the only source of support for the ministry of the Penn Central Conference and the primary source of support for the work of the denomination. Through our gifts to OCWM we engage in ministry in places far beyond our local parish, making a difference in people's lives, indeed, changing lives in dramatic and meaningful ways. When it is time for your church to adopt a budget—you can make a difference by insuring that your church includes OCWM in the budget at a minimum level of 10% of local expenses.

Rev. Kenneth Heasley, Chair of the OCWM Ministries Team is retired, after serving churches in Ohio, Maryland and Pennsylvania. He has served on the United Church Board for World Ministries, traveled throughout Central America visiting ecumenical mission work, and has been a delegate to three General Synods.