

THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE PENN WEST CONFERENCE ANNUAL GATHERING AND MEETING

Arrival and Welcome – Directions to California University and a campus map are included in this mailing. Overnight accommodations are in the Johnson Hall dormitory. We will have bright-vested volunteers available for help with moving in and registering. As you enter the campus, your first stop should be to temporarily park in the front of the Convocation Center to register. (If, for some reason, you need to spend more time here, you should utilize parking lot #11, near Gallagher Hall). Your second stop should then be to travel down Third Street and temporarily park by Johnson Hall to unload your vehicle (commuters, of course, may skip this step). Then you should proceed up Hickory Street and park in lot #17. If lot #17 becomes full, you may get a pass to park in lot #19. The dining hall is “Goldrush” in the Eberly Student Center. There is a 4-5 minute walk between the Convocation Center and Johnson Hall, and the dining hall is roughly in between these buildings. If you have mobility issues, golf carts are available to transport you. Be sure to let our volunteers know and they will be happy to assist you.

Bath Towels & Pillows – These are provided, but if you wish, you may bring your own.

Bookstore – We will again have our bookstore that will include a variety of United Church of Christ items. Credit cards, cash, and checks will be accepted. We are no longer able to invoice churches for payment.

Conference Choir – Everyone is welcome to sing in the choir for the Closing Worship on Saturday. Rehearsal times are announced in the schedule.

Dress – Dress is casual. Please bring an umbrella in case it rains!

Offerings – Our offering for our opening worship service on Friday afternoon will be directed toward the LeMoyne Center in Washington PA, via our Regional Youth Event efforts. The offering for our closing worship will be directed toward the fund to support the educational efforts (for children & pastors) in the Northwest Luzon Conference of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (the SHEEP fund). We would like our churches to receive offerings for these in advance so that these gifts are received not simply from the delegates who attend but from our churches themselves. We are also hoping that our youth will receive a “noisy offering” for the offering at our opening worship. We are hoping to receive our offerings in shoes or boots!

Prayer Chapel – We are planning to have a Prayer Chapel available in a room near the plenary space in the Convocation Center. Thank you to Betty Royer for hosting this. You are welcome to visit this space if you wish to find a quiet environment for prayer and meditation.

Youth – We encourage all our churches to bring a youth delegate with them (ages 13-19). The Annual Gathering & Meeting is youth inclusive rather than youth focused, so we will encourage youth to participate in the meeting with the adults as fully as possible. Valarie Poole is providing some programmatic activities for our youth this year. These activities are geared toward youth ages 13-17. For children under 13, there are no activities and it will be expected that they will be supervised throughout the event by a parent(s) or guardian(s). While we will not be providing supervision or chaperones during all of the hours of activity, certified supervision will be provided during the youth specific activities. Please see agenda for times. We will provide a special block of secure rooms for our youth and certified chaperones during the nighttime hours of 11 PM through 7 AM. In addition, during the hours of activity, there will be a designated area where youth may visit and designated certified volunteers who will be available to help or assist youth who desire time apart from the Annual Gathering & Meeting. Our care for our youth is such that we desire their participation as much as possible but also acknowledge that they may need space apart and trusted adult volunteers who may be available to them during the Annual Gathering & Meeting.