

# **Welcome to the 56<sup>th</sup> Annual Gathering**

## **Of the Churches in the Penn West Conference**

### **of the United Church of Christ**

Once again we send you greetings and an extravagant welcome to our 56<sup>th</sup> Annual Gathering at the lovely California University. We encourage you to wear your Love Shoes as we explore the three great loves (children, neighbors, and creation). We will have many opportunities to share in the word, ideas and experiences with other of our brothers and sisters. Youth will have a huge presence as we join in various workshops and guest speakers presenting exciting topics to us.

Over the past year your board has focused on issues, challenges, and opportunities of our members, and their churches. We have taken a critical look at what our mission is and how we can come to live in it. As we also look to live into God's word we looked at our role as disciples, determining where we're going and how we are going to get there. Six of our congregations have reached out to the Transformation and Renewal Team for help to walk together through this process. We have been blessed with teams of talented passionate members willing to putting their shoulder to the wheel to help local churches and the conference manage our resources and gifts. As Jesus instructed his disciples we too need to be, and to find more followers for him. Not only have we been blessed with many and varied talents but we also need to help encourage others to use their blessings to serve and glorify him as well. We will have two Special Offering opportunities to share our monetary gifts with two of our mission partners The LeMoyne Center and The Sheep Fund.

Please enjoy our time together and participate in the workshops and worship opportunities available. Reconnect with old friends and meet new ones while we reflect in God's word.

Tom Croner, Assistant Moderator