

**Welcome to the 57th Annual Gathering,
of the Churches in the Penn West Conference
of the United Church of Christ.**

We are very excited about the opportunity to come together at this year's gathering. Your comments from previous year's meeting evaluations have been heard and the new venue will eliminate the need for movement between buildings. We will be able to meet and eat in the same building, making it easier for folks to move between sessions. We are blessed to have with us both days the Reverend Traci Blackmon from our National Office in Cleveland to help us better understand the mission of the United Church of Christ: "A just world for all".

God has blessed us with many disciples having a wide variety of incredible talents they are eager to share with our conference committees in addition to their local church. Jesus tells us to go forth and make disciples. We encourage you and your friends to join one of our committees that may stimulate your passion for the church. In case you haven't noticed we are getting older, so if we really want to leave a legacy to the Church and God's world we may wish to focus a portion of our energy toward mentoring others to walk with us on our faith journey. Why shouldn't we encourage these folks to help by getting involved with a committee? More hands not only make work lighter, the side benefit is that more of our churches have knowledge of the Conference activities to both support and take advantage of our programs. With the addition of our Zoom Meeting capabilities committee members no longer require travel to the conference office to participate in meetings.

The information received and exchanged over the next two days will guide us and in turn help us inspire our local churches through the coming year and beyond. The fellowship and worship experienced during this time together will benefit us all. 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