

From the Moderator...

“Beloved we are God’s children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed...”
(I John 1:2a - NRSV)

Beloved Siblings,

Beloved we are God’s children now...and it has been a great pleasure to work with and get to know so many of you. It has been a joy to see your passion for Christ’s church and the work of the church. I thank you all for the opportunity to serve with you. You are to be commended. The mission and ministry of the Penn West Conference has been maintained and lived faithfully.

Now, as we prepare for this annual meeting, this exciting joint meeting of all four conferences, we are in the midst of an incredible conversation about the future of the United Church of Christ in our four conferences. How will we go forward?

Now is the time to let your voice be heard. Now is the time to listen and learn. Now is the time to consider what we may yet be. Without a doubt, the world has changed and the way of being church has changed for all of us. We will be doing the “good work” of discovering and discerning so that what we will be, may be revealed.

I know that it is difficult and can feel somewhat overwhelming. There are parts of who we are that will be different and things that we will miss. There are also opportunities that we cannot fully see yet that are possible.

I want to encourage you to engage the conversation, raise your questions, and listen to one another in love. At our All-Association meeting in Ebensburg, I stood to say that change is coming, it is inevitable. We have two options: One, we can do nothing and just wait to see what happens. Two, we can embrace this opportunity to have a voice in shaping our future.

The excellent leadership of the four conference ministers in being proactive in beginning this conversation is to be applauded. Their ability to bring us together and begin the dialogue which now encompasses not only the 25 people of the working group, but many more who have been recruited to work on various committees has been remarkable. Through it all we have discovered that we are more alike than we are different, and we believe that we are Stronger Together.

Peace!

David Mears

Penn West Conference, Moderator