

From the desk of the Conference Moderator . . .

September 12, 2025

To the members of the Penn West Conference:

Grace and peace to you!

I am excited to celebrate our conference's history with you in Greenville, and hope you will plan to attend in person or by Zoom.

It is no coincidence that our Special Gathering and Meeting is taking place on November 1. This date is celebrated across Christian church as All Saints Day: a day for us to remember the great cloud of witnesses who surround and encourage us. In our United Church of Christ tradition, we not only remember the great saints of the Bible and the early church, but we also think of saints closer to home: the people in our own churches, our neighborhoods, and our families who inspire us to draw nearer to God.

For us in Penn West Conference, one of these saints is the Rev. David Ackerman. For the past eleven years, David has worked faithfully and tirelessly as our Conference Minister. He has resourced and celebrated our churches and associations, guided search and call, offered counsel in times of challenge, and developed new conference ministries and partnerships. He has driven tens of thousands of miles and participated in hundreds and hundreds of meetings. He has represented our Conference in the national setting through his service on the United Church of Christ Board of Directors, the Council of Conference Ministers, and the Insurance Board. With his colleagues from across Pennsylvania, he led the Keystone process, guiding us into the next era of our history. Through it all, his kind wisdom and his deep love for this Conference has sustained and supported us.

When the Keystone Conference comes into being on January 1, David's ministry as our Penn West Conference Minister will come to an end. While he will continue to serve as a Transitional Regional Conference Minister on the Keystone staff, the end of his service as Conference Minister is an important opportunity for us to express our thanks.

One project that is especially dear to David's heart is the Caring for Churches, Caring for Clergy fund. This initiative supports the Conference's innovative mission grants program, which provides support to new ministries and ongoing needs to churches across the conference. It also supports the Pension Board's programs that help Penn West ministers in need. Even after our merger into the Keystone Conference, these grant funds

will continue to be reserved for churches and clergy located within the geographic bounds of the historic Penn West Conference.

Please join me in making a special contribution to the Caring for Churches, Caring for Clergy fund in David's honor: from yourself, from your church, or from your association. You may mail your gift to the Conference office, or give online by clicking the "Donate" button at pennwest.org (Be sure to specify "Penn West Conference" as the recipient, and note in the memo line that the gift is for Caring for Churches in honor of Rev. Ackerman.) At the Special Gathering & Meeting on November 1, we will be announcing the total of these gifts, so please be sure the office receives your gift by October 30.

I also invite you to bring a card or note for Rev. Ackerman to the meeting (or mail in advance to the Conference office, noting on the envelope that it is to be opened at the meeting) reflecting on what his ministry has meant to our conference, to your church, or in your life. We will offer a box of these greetings to David as well.

If you have any questions about this gift, please reach out to me at 412-523-6736 or lbarlow@casp.org. Thank you for joining me in honoring David's amazing season of ministry to the Penn West Conference!

Your sister in Christ,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "The Rev. Liddy Barlow". The signature is written in a cursive style, with "The Rev." in smaller letters and "Liddy Barlow" in larger, more prominent letters.

The Rev. Liddy Barlow
Moderator, Penn West Conference