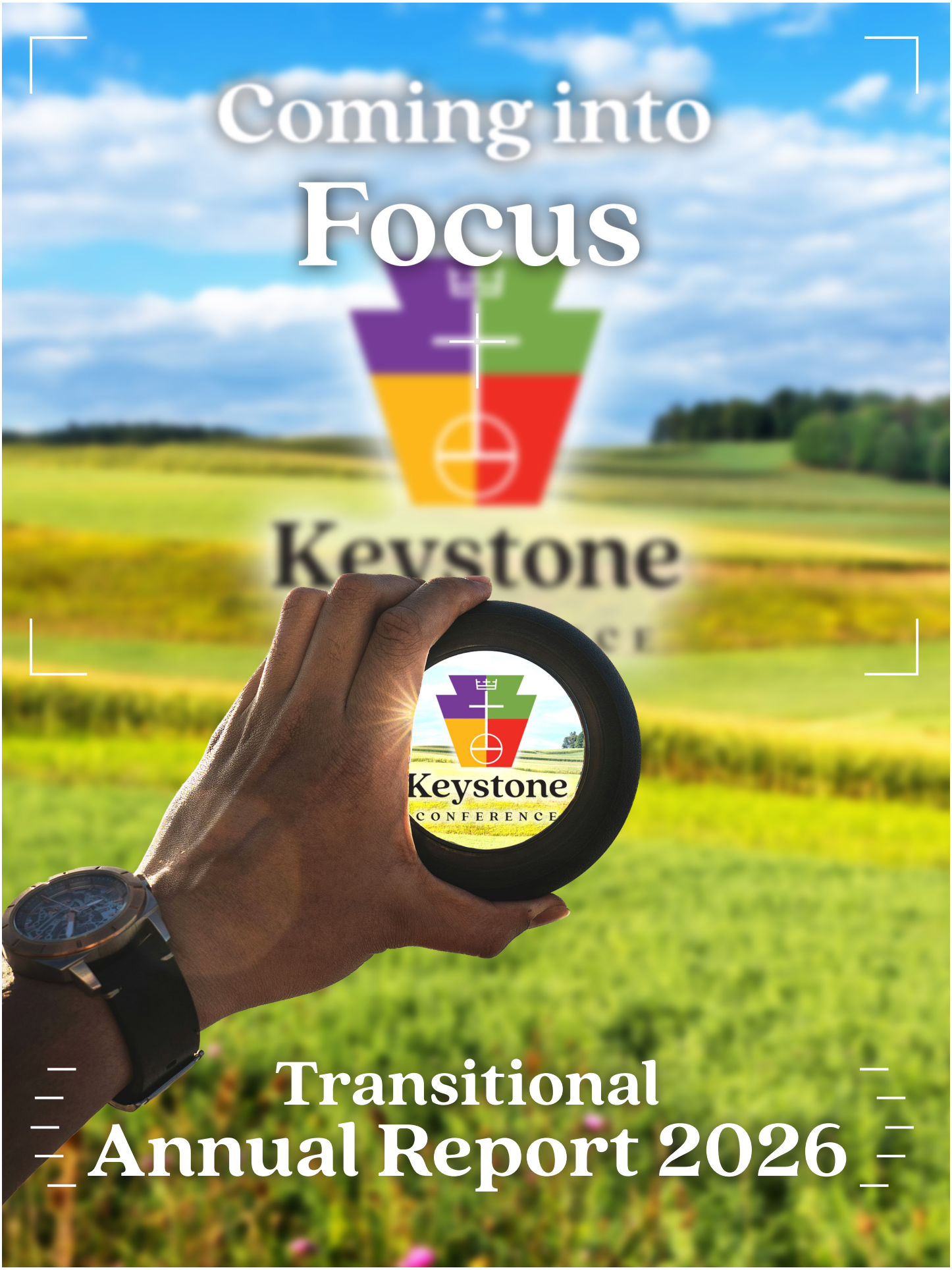

Coming into
Focus
Keystone
Keystone
CONFERENCE
Transitional
Annual Report 2026

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Executive Conference Minister's Message



"Let us sing here the alleluia while we are still anxious, so that we may one day sing it there in perfect security."

— *Augustine, Exposition on Psalm 148*

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Welcome to the very first Annual Report of the Keystone Conference!

The formation of the Keystone Conference has brought moments of uncertainty, countless decisions, and no small amount of work. Yet through it all, we have continued to sing *alleluia*. We have witnessed God's faithfulness in ways both expected and surprising. Every day I am grateful for the remarkable dedication of our Conference staff, Board of Directors, committees, volunteers, clergy, and lay leaders. Most of all, I give thanks for our local churches, whose willingness to embrace a new beginning has transformed the vision of one Conference from an idea into a vibrant reality.

The pages that follow tell that story. Yes, you will find the numbers that help measure our ministry—financial reports, demographic information, organizational milestones, and new initiatives. Those details matter because they help us understand where we have been and prepare wisely for where we are going.

But numbers alone cannot capture the life of the church.

The heart of this report is found in the stories: congregations discovering new partners in ministry, leaders growing through education and formation, communities gathering in worship and fellowship, and churches joining together to serve Christ more faithfully than any one of us could alone. These stories remind us that our conviction is more than a slogan—it is a lived reality: **Together We Are Stronger.**

This first year has laid a strong foundation, but it is only the beginning. I pray that as you read these pages, you will celebrate what God has already done through the Keystone Conference and find renewed hope for all that still lies ahead.

Grace and peace,

Rev. Carrie Call, Ph.D.
Executive Conference Minister



Who Is the Keystone Conference?



The Keystone Conference Transitional Board of Directors, working with the Conference Staff, has been walking an interesting path this past year. Sixteen of us, four from each historic Conference, met as a Board for the first time in August 2025. Some members were part of the Working Group that led us to the merger. Others of us came to the table to join in the work of the next chapter.

One of the first actions was to approve the hiring of transitional staff. With the knowledge and skill of that experienced group and the leadership of Rev. Dr. Carrie Call, the Board, by the grace of God, set about the work of moving the Keystone Conference from paper to practice. That required a truckload of items to come into focus.

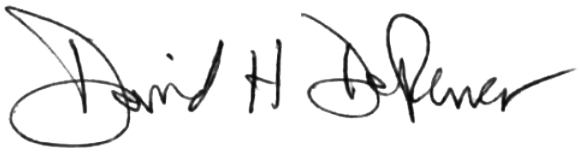
We drew on the knowledge and past practices of the four historic Conferences in making various decisions. Position descriptions, missional program development, support for related organizations, grants for innovative ministries and scholarships, and the development of various operational policies all grew from the work of our predecessor bodies. The proclamation "Together We Are Stronger" has resonated across all these decisions.

This annual report bridges the past and the future. Through the past year, we have used the word "transitional" almost constantly. But the coming year will move us from transitional to settled—settled staff and settled practices — at least for as long as the Holy Spirit allows us to be settled.

We are thankful for the support that local congregations have provided for the mission and ministry of the Keystone Conference. We pray God's continued guidance and inspiration in the coming years.

Godspeed,

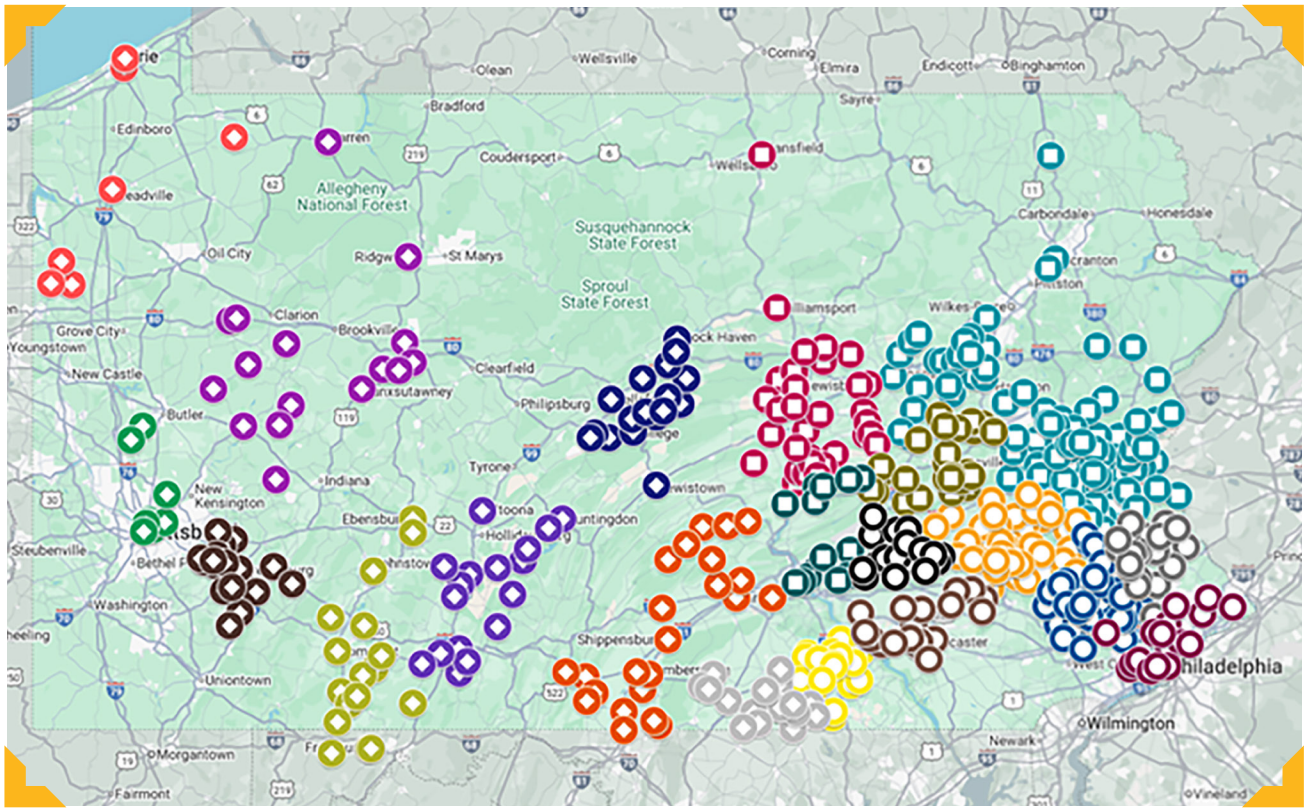
Rev. Dr. David H. DeRemer
Moderator



Who Is the Keystone Conference?

Mission Statement

Trusting in God's Grace, the Keystone Conference proclaims the living Gospel of Jesus Christ; embodies the Holy Spirit's transforming Love in the World; and cultivates and strengthens unity across Local Churches, Associations, and the wider church for the flourishing of God's commonwealth.



507 local churches

20 regional Associations

One of **33** national UCC Conferences

84,738 congregation members

average **22,675** people worshipping each Sunday

838 Authorized Ministers

2026 Inaugural Annual Meeting



After singing *We are One in the Spirit*, four symbolic representations of our Historic Conferences came together onstage into the new Keystone Conference logo. We pledged our faith aloud and we were blessed by our UCC General Minister and President Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson. The weekend of our first Annual Meeting offered a remarkable glimpse into what is possible as a newly formed Conference. All the gifts of the Historic Conferences now under one tent, ready to bless all of us in diverse ways. It was perhaps our Pentecost moment, when the Holy Spirit blessed us as a new community, calling us forward into what God envisions for us. In this new place we will turn to one another for help, for hope, and to live out the Gospel together. We will walk with Jesus, who both comforts and challenges us. In this new place we will pray for the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit. We will call upon the Spirit to uplift, enliven, and renew our souls.







Clockwise from upper left: Keystone sunflowers; voters hold green cards; Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson speaks; a Keystone lapel pin; some of the 610 attendees; together in fellowship; Marcia McFee leads a musical ministry.





Generosity and Gratitude

Churches across the Keystone Conference benefitted both from resources and staff of the Conference throughout 2026. Their stories demonstrate how Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) dollars are spent on congregational and ministerial assistance, search and call work, ministerial authorization, grants, and more. Read on to hear some reflections on where some of those resources made a difference.

Redeemer's United Church of Christ
Littlestown, PA

Lenny Bucher (Search Committee Chair)
Angie Bradner (Search Committee Secretary)



On behalf of the congregation and leadership at Redeemer's United Church of Christ, I am writing to express our heartfelt gratitude for your generous support and guidance during our pastoral search process.

Navigating a pastoral transition brings both challenges and opportunities, but knowing we had the backing, resources, and encouragement of the Keystone Conference made a difference for our search committee and our entire congregation. Your support in preparing and publishing our church profile, guidance in preparing for interviews, and feedback on the call agreement were particularly helpful, thus enabling us to approach this discernment process with confidence, hope, and clarity.

Thanks to your partnership, we are thrilled to be entering this exciting new chapter in the life of Redeemer's UCC as we welcome our new pastor. Your dedication to strengthening local churches and fostering vital ministry across our conference is truly a blessing. Thank you again for walking alongside us in faith and generosity.

With deep appreciation and peace.

Generosity and Gratitude



LiFT United Church of Christ
Lancaster, PA

Rev. Donté A. Jones

I am deeply grateful to the Keystone Conference for believing in Come, Let Us Join Our Lights Together, a public art project that brought Open and Affirming congregations across Pennsylvania together with local businesses and community organizations to create murals supporting LGBTQIA+ people. With the Conference's financial support, an idea born within one of its local congregations, LiFT UCC, grew into a statewide collaboration.

What meant the most to me was seeing what became possible when the wider church invested in the creative exploration of what ministry can look like today. New community partnerships were formed, people of all ages painted together, and some people who had grown distant from church found a new point of connection. The Conference gave our new church room to experiment, make mistakes, learn, and imagine new ways to be present in our communities. I am especially grateful to Rev. Carrie Call and the Keystone Conference for the trust and support that gave this new idea room to grow. •

Trinity United Church of Christ
Dorseyville (Pittsburgh), PA

Rev. David Mears



Generosity can sometimes come unexpectedly, and it comes during our darkest times as it did that day for Trinity United Church of Christ in Dorseyville. It was 2:00 p.m. on May 6, 2026, when I called 911 to report that the church was on fire. I stood in the parking lot, watching fire trucks roll up, news reporters appear, and chaos swirling around me as I began to realize exactly what was happening. Within two hours I was contacted by conference staff and colleagues. Within a day, we were on prayer lists across the Keystone Conference. Cards, gifts, and offers of help and support came from across our new Keystone Conference, from churches

(cont'd)

Generosity and Gratitude

Trinity UCC *cont'd*

we had not even had time to form a relationship with. Then, at the annual conference meeting we were graced with gifts, support, prayers, and words of encouragement. And it has continued. We have come to realize that our pain and sadness is shared by this beautiful covenant of churches. We know that we are not alone. The generosity of spirit across the conference is truly a gift. We have felt that support and are truly grateful. The gifts of time, money, and prayer given in such a spirit of generosity have truly blessed us and encouraged us in a difficult time. •

North Penn Association– *Upper Bucks Churches*

Rev. Kevin J. McLemore, Transitional Regional Conference Minister, Region 1



"We would rather die alone than live together." I spoke those words at a gathering of the Upper Bucks churches in the North Penn Association on Saturday, September 19, 2026. True, it's not true for all of us, as humans or as churches, but it is a phenomenon present in our country's long history and has certainly infected Christian churches. I spoke on Saturday with churches hoping to think outside the box about how to proclaim the Gospel and help their community in practical ways. The tradition of American individualism can be a gift, especially when one needs the courage to speak out an unpopular word about justice, but it also lies to us, as if we didn't really need each other, as if our enemy wasn't also our neighbor, whom we are commanded to love by Jesus. And love isn't a command to feel something but to do right by the other, if stranded on the side of the road, brutalized by thieves, abandoned by others (Luke 10:25-37).

I did a version of this workshop three years ago, but the second version, with additional new figures around pastoral searches in our Conference, felt more urgent. If God still has ministry for us to do in our communities, it's time to think about sharing and going back to a model from our American past. That past includes sharing a pastor between two churches, sharing a building with another congregation, merging with another congregation, or creating a "Co-Op" of multiple churches sharing pastors and ministry. In every work we do for the Gospel in word and deed, we should be asking ourselves, "Why are we doing this by ourselves? Who can we seek out as a partner in living out our ministry together?" Even Jesus, who I believe to be God given flesh and bone, needed fellow travelers, needed others, to do his work. And if there is change

(cont'd)

Generosity and Gratitude

North Penn Association *cont'd*

about to happen in the next few months or few years in your church, the time to start asking those questions above is now, not tomorrow. We have work to do in a world that is changing, sometimes for the good, sometimes for the bad, but our unique expression of faith in a world divided by politics and theology is sorely needed. I would rather live with others than die alone, personally. How about you?



HC Spirit Camp / KeyOM

Rev. Alice Rauch

As a member of the Outdoor Ministries Team of the historic Penn Central Conference, I am now looking forward to what the future holds for the Outdoor Ministries work of the Keystone Conference. It was a blessing to be a part of supporting the variety of Outdoor Ministry models in Penn Central, especially through sharing grants to support those efforts.

The HC Spirit Camp is a fairly new expression of Outdoor Ministries. For the last several years, the week of camp has been held at the Hartman Center Campground and Retreat Center, which is now privately owned. The support of the Conference makes it possible for us to gather at least once a year in a growing community of supportive and inclusive worship, fun, and learning; all while enjoying the gifts of creation. This Conference support has been received in the form of grants and of campership. With rising food costs, the grants help make it possible for us to feed over 100 campers and volunteers for the week. The campership make it financially possible for campers to attend. In addition, Peace Church, which received an Outdoor Ministry grant for the creation and support of their community garden, provided freshly grown produce to enhance our campers' meals.

The variety of models of Outdoor Ministries across the Keystone Conference will lead us to new and exciting ways to: "provide support, opportunities, and safe environments for all to explore and deepen faith through outdoor experiences."* Gratitude and Hope – I am always grateful for the conference making these important ministries possible AND I am hopeful as we look ahead to where God leads us in HC Spirit Camp as part of the Keystone Outdoor Ministries of the future.

**Section in quotation marks is part of the proposed description of the new Keystone Conference's Outdoor Ministry "KeyOM" team.*

Generosity and Gratitude

Fireside Fellowship United Church of Christ

Le Raysville, PA



Thank you, Keystone Conference, for your support!

Fireside Fellowship UCC began as a small group of people who, in the midst of hurt and uncertainty, held on to hope and a shared desire to continue worshiping and fellowshipping together. What began as a difficult time in our lives has become an opportunity to build something new, meaningful, and filled with hope.

Throughout this journey, the support of the Conference has been a tremendous blessing. From the very beginning, Conference staff believed in us and our vision. Their encouragement, prayers, wisdom, and guidance gave us the confidence to take those first steps when the future was uncertain. They helped us find a pastor who shared our vision and was willing to walk alongside us as we began this new ministry.

The financial support we received through the Strengthen the Church funds was equally important. These funds allowed us to pay our part-time pastor and provided a sense of stability during a time when there were so many unknowns. Knowing we had that support gave us the peace of mind to focus on rebuilding, growing, and establishing a foundation for our congregation.

More recently, the Keystone Conference sent Rev. Dr. Nora Foust, our Regional Conference Minister, to worship with us and help guide us through our next steps. Her presence, encouragement, and assistance with the important paperwork and requirements for becoming a fully recognized congregation in the United Church of Christ have been invaluable. Having someone walk alongside us as we navigate this process reminds us that we are not alone in this journey.

As we reflect on how far we have come, we recognize just how much the Conference's support has meant to us. We started as a small group simply hoping to keep our church family together. Today, we are a congregation with renewed hope, a sense of purpose, and excitement for the future. •

People of the Table

Celebrating and Energizing Ministries that End Hunger



Our Mission Focus

Our faith calls us into action. The Local Churches, Associations, and Historic Conferences of the United Church of Christ in Pennsylvania are involved—and will continue to be involved—in hundreds of efforts that seek to offer mercy, be of service, advocate in the public square, and build a just world for all. Among all of these laudable projects, we see a need for the newly-formed Conference to unite around a specific direction for our outreach in the coming years.

A mission focus for the Keystone Conference United Church of Christ offers us a way to concentrate our efforts in this initial season, amplifying our voice and helping to bring us together. We propose that this initial mission focus, People of the Table, will be a Conference priority in our founding years (2026-2028), and that the Conference Board might choose either to continue this focus or to determine a fresh mission focus to pursue in the subsequent period of Conference life.

Cheerlead

Resource

Advocate

Engage





Donor Acknowledgments



These 175 churches have contributed to Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) and the Special Mission Offerings.

Allegheny United Church of Christ, *Alleghenyville*
Bausman Memorial UCC, *Wyomissing*
Ben Salem UCC, *Lehighton*
Brush Creek Salem UCC, *Irwin*
Brush Valley Fusion of Faith, *Madisonburg*
Calvary Reformed Church UCC, *Reading*
Carversville Christian Church UCC, *Carversville*
Chapel Hill UCC, *Lemoyne*
Christ Church of Bath, UCC, *Bath*
Christ Church UCC, *Trumbauersville*
Christ Church UCC, *Elizabethtown*
Christ Church United Church of Christ, *Norristown*
Christ United Church of Christ, *Codorus*
Christ United Church of Christ, *Latrobe*
Church of the Apostles UCC, *Lancaster*
Church of the Good Shepherd UCC, *Boyertown*
Church of the Redeemer UCC, *Hershey*
Community UCC, *Reading*
Denmark Manor UCC, *Export*
Dover United Church of Christ, *Dover*
East Vincent UCC, *Spring City*
Emanuel UCC, *Warren*
Emmanuel Reformed UCC, *Export*
Emmanuel UCC, *Abbottstown*
Emmanuel UCC, *Hanover*
Epler's Church United Church of Christ, *Leesport*
Faith United Church of Christ, *Grantville*
Faith United Church of Christ, *State College*
Faith United Church of Christ, *Altoona*
Faith United Church of Christ, *Center Valley*
Falkner Swamp Reformed UCC, *Gilbertsville*
First Reformed Church, UCC, *Sunbury*
First Reformed United Church of Christ, *Hamburg*
First Reformed United Church of Christ, *Greensburg*
First Reformed United Church of Christ, *Berwick*
First Trinity UCC, *Youngwood*
First United Church of Christ, *Royersford*
First United Church of Christ, *Schuylkill Haven*
First United Church of Christ, *Harrison City*
First United Church of Christ, *Irwin*
First United Church of Christ, *Manor*
First United Church of Christ, *Millvale*
First United Church of Christ, *Hellertown*
First United Church of Christ, *Middleburg*
Forks United Church of Christ, *Stockertown*
Friedens UCC, *Oley*
Good Shepherd/Tuckerton UCC, *Reading*
Grace United Church of Christ, *Lebanon*
Greenawalds UCC, *Allentown*
Gulph United Church of Christ, *Gulph Mills*
Hamilton Park UCC, *Lancaster*
Heidelberg UCC, *Schwenksville*
Heidelberg Union Church of Heidelberg Township, *Slatington*
Hill United Church of Christ, *Lebanon*
Huff's Union Church, *Alburtis*
Immanuel UCC, *Shillington*
Jerusalem United Church of Christ, *Rimersburg*
Jordan United Church of Christ, *Allentown*
LiFT United Church of Christ, *Lancaster*
Lower Saucon UCC, *Hellertown*
Mount Hope UCC, *Portage*
Mount Troy UCC, *Pittsburgh*
Mount Zion UCC, *York*
Nevin Memorial UCC, *Fairmount City*
New Covenant UCC, *Williamsport*
New Creation, *Easton*
New Hope (Fissel's) UCC, *Glen Rock*
Old First Reformed Church UCC, *Philadelphia*
Olivet Reformed UCC, *Reading*
Olivet-Schwenkfelder UCC, *East Norriton*
Peace in Zion UCC, *Zieglerville*
Penbrook UCC, *Harrisburg*
Pleasantville UCC, *Chalfont*
Reformed Church of the Ascension UCC, *Norristown*
Resurrected Life Community Church, *Allentown*
Rosedale UCC, *Laureldale*
Saint Andrew's UCC, *Perkasie*
Saint Andrew's UCC, *Reading*
Saint Jacob UCC, *South Bend*
Saint James UCC, *Limerick*
Saint John UCC, *Riegelsville*
Saint John's (Hain's) UCC, *Wernersville*
Saint John's Harrold Reformed UCC, *Greensburg*

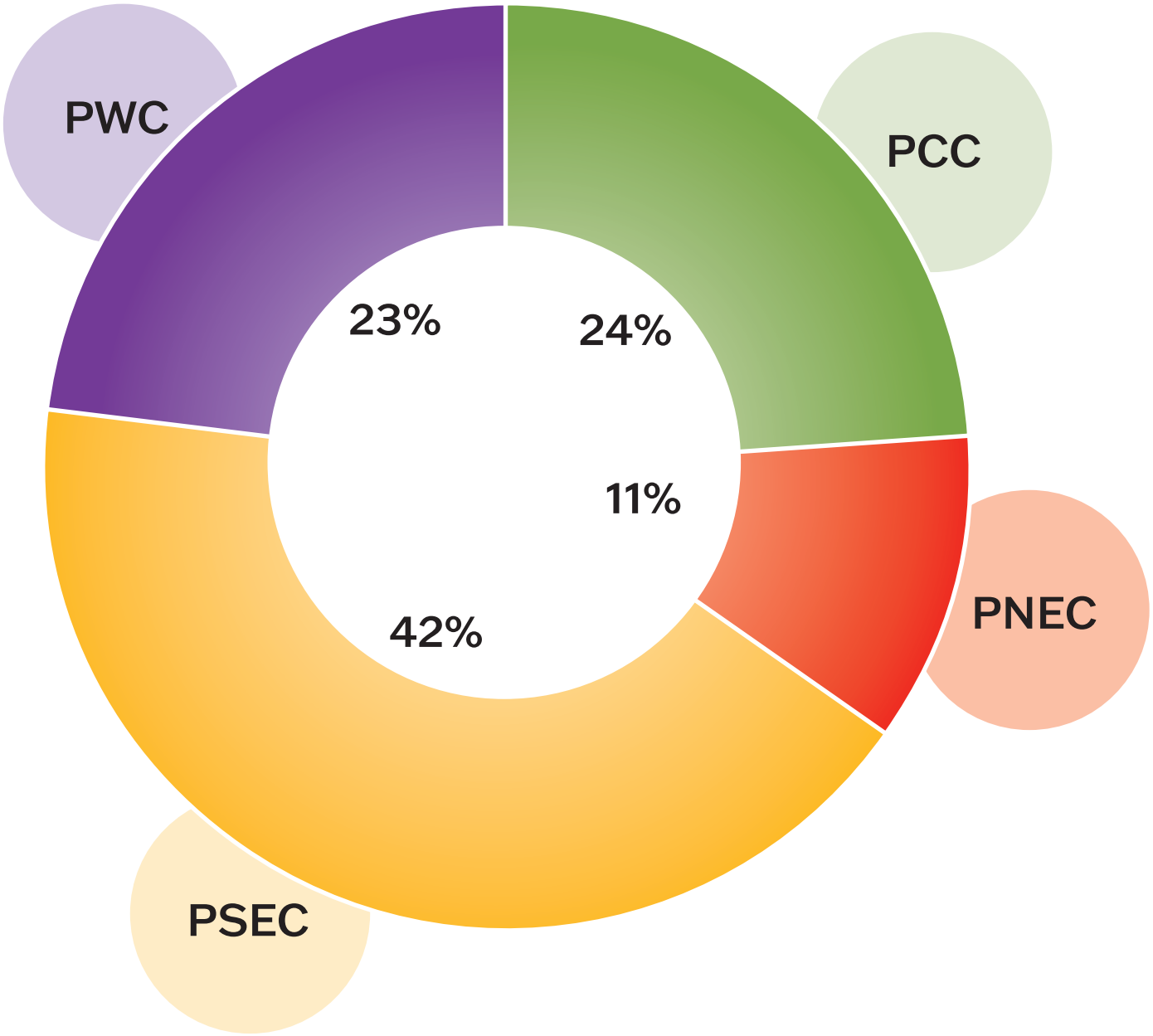
Donor Acknowledgments

Saint John's Tylersville UCC, *Loganton*
Saint John's UCC, *Phoenixville*
Saint John's UCC, *Fleetwood*
Saint John's UCC, *Boalsburg*
Saint John's UCC, *Lewisburg*
Saint John's UCC, *Evans City*
Saint John's UCC, *Ligonier*
Saint John's UCC, *Martinsburg*
Saint John's UCC, *Salisbury*
Saint John's UCC, *Allentown*
Saint John's UCC, *Emmaus*
Saint John's UCC, *Laurys Station*
Saint John's UCC, *Nazareth*
Saint John's UCC, *Northampton*
Saint Luke's UCC, *Ottsville*
Saint Luke's UCC, *Lititz*
Saint Mark's UCC, *Cressona*
Saint Mark's UCC, *Fredonia*
Saint Matthew (Coleman's) UCC, *Spring Glen*
Saint Matthew's UCC, *Chester Springs*
Saint Paul UCC, *Sacramento*
Saint Paul's UCC, *Amityville*
Saint Paul's UCC, *Fleetwood*
Saint Paul's UCC, *Fort Washington*
Saint Paul's UCC, *Kutztown*
Saint Paul's UCC, *Exton*
Saint Paul's UCC, *Mahanoy City*
Saint Paul's UCC, *Ringtown*
Saint Paul's UCC, *Sellersville*
Saint Paul's UCC, *Auburn*
Saint Paul's UCC, *Robesonia*
Saint Paul's UCC, *Mc Connellsburg*
Saint Paul's UCC, *Mechanicsburg*
Saint Paul's UCC, *New Oxford*
Saint Paul's UCC, *Conoquenessing*
Saint Paul's UCC, *Erie*
Saint Paul's UCC, *Johnstown*
Saint Paul's UCC, *Knox*
Saint Paul's UCC, *Latrobe*
Saint Paul's UCC, *Northampton*
Saint Paul's UCC, *Swiftwater*
Saint Peter's UCC, *Fleetwood*
Saint Peter's UCC, *Orwin*
Saint Peter's UCC, *Topton*
Saint Peter's UCC, *Punxsutawney*
Saint Peter's Union Church, *Macungie*
Saint Thomas UCC, *Harrisburg*
Salem (Rohrerstown) UCC, *Lancaster*
Salem United Church of Christ, *Campbelltown*
Salem United Church of Christ, *Columbia*
Salem United Church of Christ, *Elizabethville*
Salem United Church of Christ, *Harrisburg*
Salem United Church of Christ, *Bath*
Salem United Church of Christ, *Weatherly*
Schwarzwald UCC, *Reading*
Shenkel UCC, *Pottstown*
Solomon's UCC, *Perkasie*
Solomon's UCC, *Chambersburg*
St John's United Church of Christ Fullerton, *Whitehall/Fullerton*
St Thomas UCC, *Bethlehem*
Stoystown Charge UCC, *Stoystown*
The Abbey Reformed UCC, *Huntingdon*
The New Goshenhoppen UCC, *East Greenville*
Tinicum United Church of Christ, *Pipersville*
Trinity Reformed UCC, *Grantsville*
Trinity UCC, *Telford*
Trinity UCC, *Tower City*
Trinity UCC, *Centre Hall*
Trinity UCC, *East Petersburg*
Trinity UCC, *Mercersburg*
Trinity UCC, *Palmyra*
Trinity UCC, *Waynesboro*
Trinity UCC, *Delmont*
Trinity UCC, *Pittsburgh*
Trinity UCC, *Greensburg*
Trinity UCC, *Quakertown*
Trinity UCC - Friends Cove Charge UCC, *Bedford*
Trinity UCC of Collegeville, *Collegeville*
Trinity United Church of Christ, *Mount Bethel*
Union United Church of Christ, *Neff's*
United Church of Christ at Valley Forge, *Wayne*
United Church of Christ East Goshen, *West Chester*
Zion Stone Valley UCC, *Dalmatia*
Zion UCC, *Frostburg*
Zion United Church of Christ, *Arendtsville*
Zion United Church of Christ, *Orangeville*
Zion United Church of Christ, *Stroudsburg*
Zions Reformed UCC, *Greenville*
Zion's Union Church Maxatawny, *Kutztown*
Zion's United Church of Christ, *Transfer*
Zwingli UCC, *Souderton*
Zwingli UCC, *East Berlin*

Financials

Net Assets from the Four Historic PA Conferences

as of January 1, 2026



Keystone CONFERENCE
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Together We Are Stronger.

6490 Linglestown Road

PO Box 6625

Harrisburg, PA 17112

717-652-1560

keystoneucc.org

Attendees of the first Keystone Conference Annual Meeting
Millersville University, Millersville, PA, June 5–7, 2026



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST