

NEWS of the 24 Churches of the York Association

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Website: www.yorkassociationucc.org

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JANUARY 2025 – Newsletter

Mission Statement

We, the members of the York Association of the United Church of Christ, are called by God and empowered by the Holy Spirit to represent Christ by:

- supporting one another in our covenantal relationship;
- calling clergy and laity to mutual accountability to the faith and order of the church;
- witnessing together to God’s redeeming love. (Adopted April 28, 1991)

Equilla Curry’s - Ecclesiastical Council at Faith UCC, 509 Pacific Ave, York

Authorized ministers and lay delegates, please mark your calendars for **Sunday, January 12 at 3:00 pm**. At that date and time at **Faith UCC** we will be having an Ecclesiastical Council for Equilla Curry. At this Council, participants will have an opportunity to hear Equilla talk about her journey towards ordained ministry and ask questions about her Ordination Paper. The gathered body will then vote/discern on whether Equilla is prepared for ordained ministry in churches across the UCC.

Raised in the African Methodist Episcopal church in Los Angeles, Equilla has been involved with a number of different churches over the course of her life. Among many other things, she has facilitated bible studies, created curriculums, and organized prayer and hospitality ministries.

After moving to York County over a decade ago, she pursued degrees in business administration and accounting before sensing a call to chaplaincy. This call to chaplaincy arose in part from the experience of caring for her aging parents and her late husband. She also believes that God’s love should be shared with all people. She chose to attend Lancaster Theological Seminary, and completed her Masters of Divinity in 2024. While at LTS, she learned about and got involved with UCC churches in the area. She became a member of Faith UCC and has led worship in other UCC churches. She has attended PCCUC meetings and is Secretary of our York Association.

**The next newsletter, FEBRUARY, will be
emailed January 20, 2024.**

**Please send articles to
news@yorkassociationucc.org
by January 18. Thank You!**

Rev. D. Marie Tribble – Installation Heidelberg UCC, 47 W. Philadelphia St, York

The Heidelberg UCC Congregation warmly invites you to join us in celebrating the Installation Service of our new Pastor, Rev. D. Marie Tribble on **Saturday, January 25 @ 4:00 pm**. This sacred and joyful occasion marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter in our shared ministry, and we would be deeply honored by your presence. Our guest Preacher will be Rev. Dr. Leslie D. Callahan from the St. Paul’s Baptist Church in Philadelphia. Immediately following the service, a reception will be held in the auditorium. For additional information, please contact 717.854.7125.

“In the Bulb, there is a Flower”

It was 2004, and a very emotional and important decision was being made that would greatly impact **York's Emmanuel UCC** on East Market Street. Attendance had been quite low each week, and maintaining the church was simply not possible. The congregation had previously written a “Living Will” that required the church to do a self-examination if a lower attendance or low financial marker was met. Church members were wondering how they could walk away from a gorgeous building that was such a spiritual and meaningful part of their lives, some for their entire lives. It was heart-wrenching to think about going elsewhere. Margaret Sultner, who has attended Emmanuel for over seventy years, remembered this time. “I was a member since I was six, and I knew nothing else. It was hard to let go of a home away from home.”

Emmanuel's pastor at the time, Rev. Della Fahnestock, surprised many in the congregation with an innovative proposal. Perhaps Emmanuel could live on in a unique way--continuing its commitment to share faith and community outreach, but without a building. With much prayer, discussion and open minds, Pastor Della and about twenty interested people created a new reality and vision for the church, “traveling light” as Jesus had done.

Twenty years later, Emmanuel remains an active member of the United Church of Christ and is thriving as a home for spiritual sojourners. Decisions are made through a consensus-building process. The congregation identifies as “covenant participants” instead of “church members” and renews their covenant yearly. Those who desire a connection to the church but without joining are “Friends of Emmanuel.” The church's Living Will is reviewed yearly and updated when needed, ensuring that the church remains healthy. The church also is intentionally small, under thirty covenant participants. According to the Living Will, if attendance grows to 40, a second church planting would be considered.

As followers of Jesus, committed to “traveling light,” the congregation has needed to be flexible about meeting spaces. Over the years, worship services have been in a room at a Community Center as well as in a hotel conference room. For the past five years, Hayshire UCC has generously rented its Fellowship Hall to Emmanuel for Sunday worship.

Since its 2004 restart, wonderful pastors have led Emmanuel. For the first eighteen years, there were settled pastors Rev. Della Fahnestock, Rev. Kay Rader, Rev. Mike Loser, and Rev. Laura Ramsey, as well as Interim minister, Rev. Rick Pulling and supply pastor, Rev. Dominique Denman. Since 2022, the church has continued to thrive without a settled pastor. Instead, a flow of diverse supply pastors has added dimension to the church: MiD Spring Davidson, Rev. Joslin Kearse, Rev. Megan Mathieson, and currently MiD Jamie Gruber. Everyone agrees that the congregation has spiritually grown through their presence.

Emmanuel's congregation size and weekly attendance have been steady during the last twenty years, with between ten and twenty attending in person or, since Covid, also over Zoom. The church's Mission Statement, read together weekly, includes that the church will, “...actively sustain a creative and constructive presence in the world.,” making a commitment to live faith outside of “church.” With no building issues to take care of, money and energy can be used elsewhere. Tithing to Our Church's Wider Mission is built into Emmanuel's annual budget. Zooming services two Sundays a month saves rent money for quarterly charitable donations. As a Creation Justice congregation, Emmanuel cares for God's creation by tending trees at Nixon Park, writing environmental voting postcards, hosting guest speakers, collecting plastic and paper for recycling, and together reading and discussing books on environmental issues. As the first Open and Affirming congregation in the York area, Emmanuel has been supporting our LGBTQIA+ siblings, sponsoring and attending events, and creating a safe worship space for all.

Additional church outreach has included: Sandwich sales and a yearly yard sale, with all proceeds going to a girls' school in Kenya; writing Letters to the Editor on a variety of issues, such as book banning; volunteering at Mr. Sandy's Veteran Center to do clean ups, and providing meals and treats to the homeless veterans. In recent years, the church has donated supplies and packed backpacks to Church World Service, participated in the Race Against Racism and annual CROP Hunger Walks, prepped food at the York County Food Alliance “Squash Hunger,” and led sing-alongs at Margaret Moul Home. During the Covid lockdown, Emmanuel sent monthly donations to local charitable organizations.

Worship is interactive at Emmanuel, including alternative versions of the Prayer of Our Savior, “Readers Theater,” and sometimes a Fruit Salad Communion. After the one-hour service, there is an hour of open and respectful discussion, in which all ideas are welcome. Listening to and learning from one another is essential. Another essential is Music. The congregation loves to harmonize when meeting in person, especially during its favorite hymns. One such hymn, “In the Bulb There is a Flower” by Natalie Sleeth, has lyrics that seem to touch directly on the church's story. The second stanza includes, “...from the past will come the future; what it holds, a mystery, unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.” For the past twenty years, this congregation has seen God's mystery unfolding in so many ways. May God continue to reveal God's self well into the future, at Emmanuel UCC York!

Emmanuel UCC York website: emmanueluucc.org

Attn: York Association UCC Clergy and MIDs
York Association Clergy and MIDs will meet on
Wednesday, January 8, at 11 am for brunch at Lion's Pride
Restaurant in Red Lion.

2025 Committees and Leadership

At our November 2024 Annual meeting we installed and welcomed the following people into leadership positions in our York Association (you can also find this list on <https://www.yorkassociationucc.org/>). Of course, these individuals are *not the total* of our York Association. ***You plus these individuals are the York Association in total.*** All our churches. And all our church members.

However, to many people in the pews of our churches, the work of our York Association (and Penn Central Conference) is largely invisible. The local church seems to encompass what it means to be church. Those relationships near at hand are so tangible and important that we forget that we are bound with covenantal ties to those beyond our sight.

In recent years, your York Association has been doing things such as planning Annual meetings and other educational offerings, encouraging mutual mission work in York County, responding to crises, supporting ministers, and answering a wide variety of questions.

Truth be told, our Penn Central Conference has been doing work that falls under the purview of its Associations, including the York Association (to see a list of our purposes, find our Constitution on <https://www.yorkassociationucc.org/>). As the Conference's financial resources and staffing decreases, our York Association will need to do more, especially with respect to supporting our clergy, but in other ways as well.

Our world around us is changing ever more rapidly as is the spiritual landscape on which we are situated. Hanging on to the past may offer succor and comfort but is not a path to church health. For our churches and our authorized ministers to be as vital and adaptable as we will need to be, we will all need to work more closely together. As your Council President for the next two years, I aim to "bless the ties that bind" and exercise those ties as much as possible.

God's shalom, healing, wholeness and peace be with you all in the year ahead,

Dave

York Association Council Officers

President - Rev. David Martin,
St. Paul's Stoverstown, 2026

Vice-President – Jean Weidler,
St. Peter's Lischey's, 2026

Secretary - Equilla Curry, Faith York, 2025

Treasurer - Charles Eisenhart, Hayshire York, 2025

York Association Committee Chairs

Communication Committee - Jean Weidler,
St. Peter's Lischey's, 2026

Community Outreach Co-Chair – Joy Gobrecht,
St. Paul's, 2025

Community Outreach Co-Chair - George DeMers,
Mt. Zion York, 2026

Committee on Ministry - Rev. Eva O'Diam,
Dover, 2025

Nominations Committee – Barb Crum,
Hayshire, York, 2026

Parish Life, Lisa Young, Hayshire, York, 2026

York Association Council Members At Large

Joann Kreeger, Starview, Mt Wolf, 2026

Rev. Martha Boyer, Starview, Mt Wolf, 2026

Barb Crum, Hayshire, York, 2026

Rev. Kelly Shiflett, Trinity, Hellam, 2025

Committee on Ministry

Chair - Rev. Eva O'Diam, Dover, 2025

Rev. Dr. Kellie C. Turner, Trinity, York, 2026

Larry Bean, Faith, York, 2026

Cathy Rentzel, Starview, Mt. Wolf, 2026

Rev. Rick Pulling, St John's Blymire's, York, 2025

Pam Rutledge, Dover, Dover, 2025

Rev. Cathy Sherry, Hayshire, York, 2026

Community Outreach Committee

Co-chair - George DeMers, Mt. Zion, York, 2024

Co-chair - Joy Gobrecht, St Paul's, Stoverstown, 2025

Sheryl Smith, Faith, York, 2023

Communications Committee

Chair - Jean Weidler, St. Peter's Lischey's, 2026

Ex-officio - Andrew Boyer, Starview, Mt. Wolf

Ex-officio - Sue Barnes, Heidelberg, York

Ex-officio - Jaron Flickinger, Shiloh, York

Nominations Committee

Co-Chair - Barb Crum, Hayshire York, 2026

Co-Chair - Rev. Chris Anderson, Heidelberg,
York, 2026

Rev. Susan Emmons, Shiloh, 2026

Andrew Boyer, Starview Mt Wolf, 2025

Parish Life

Lisa Young, Hayshire, York, 2026

Equilla Curry, Faith, York, 2026

Members Serving in the Wider Church

PCC Board of Directors - Rev. Dr. Chris Rodkey,
Heidelberg, York, 2027

PCC Board of Directors - Dr. Janis Taylor,
St. John's Red Lion, 2026

PCC Nomination Commission - Rev. Chris Anderson,
Heidelberg, York, 2026

PCC Commission on Ministry - Rev. Eva O'Diam,
Dover, 2025

PCC Outdoor Ministries Commission - Dr. Janis Taylor,
St. John's, Red Lion, 2026

UCC Synod Delegate Clergy - Rev. Martha Boyer,
Starview, Mt Wolf, 2025 & 2028

UCC General Synod Delegate Laywoman - Joann Kreeger,
Starview, Mt. Wolf, 2025

UCC General Synod Delegate Layman - Glenn Young,
Hayshire York, 2025

To kick off our 275th Anniversary Celebration at

St. Peter's Lischeys UCC

Join us for an engaging presentation by

Shawn Carbaugh

A renowned local historian

January 5th at 10:30 AM

Shawn will delve into the fascinating early history of the Spring Grove area. With deep roots in the community—his family has lived here for over 250 years—Shawn brings unique insights and a heartfelt passion for local history.

- Following the event, enjoy a delightful church social where you can connect with others and share your own stories about the area.

Location: St. Peter's Lischeys UCC,

5671 Lischeys Church Rd., Spring Grove

Don't miss this opportunity to celebrate the rich heritage of Spring Grove!