



November 18, 2018

## Dates To Save To Your 2019 Calendar

**Lay Leader Boundary Training**— January 26

**ALICE Training**—February 23 or March 9  
(Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate)

**Stewardship Training**—March 23

**Team Building Through Improved Communications -  
Congregational Development**—March 30

**Church Closure Workshop**—April 6

**Secretary Training**—April 25

**Spring Youth Event**—April 26-28

**Search & Call Summit**—May 4

**Post High School Event** — May 24-26

**General Synod**—June 21-25

**Congregational Development**—September 7 or September 28 or  
October 5

**Ventures Retreat**—September 24-26

**Walking with God Retreat**—October 11-12

**Fall Youth Event**—November 8-10

All the training events listed above will be sponsored by the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference. Watch for details on each as the date gets closer.



## UCC Annual Report for 2017 Now Available

The Annual Report for the United Church of Christ for the year 2017 is now available online. For updates on the UCC from the General Minister and President, Wider Church Ministries, Local Church Ministries, financial details on the denomination, and more, go to:

<https://www.uccfiles.com/pdf/2017-Annual-Report.pdf>

## A Timely Thanksgiving Message From Our Conference Minister

Happy Thanksgiving to you and the people God has called you to love and serve. As we stand on the cusp of this national holiday, recent events at home and abroad have compelled me to share a few thoughts about how we live together as a church, a nation and world community.

Thanksgiving has always been one of my favorite holidays. It has none of the pressures of Christmas gift giving and all of the pleasures of Christmas feasting. It is the most religious of all our non-religious holidays and unifies people around the simple themes of gathering and gratitude. I am weary of the Christmas consumerism that is absorbing the day in the name of economic necessity. We are a stronger people when we suspend a day's activity for the simple but critical act of expressing thanks.

It is a distressing irony that this year's Thanksgiving celebration, which has at its source the coming together of indigenous Americans and European Refugees, is happening in the midst of mistruths and lies about the caravan of refugees headed to our southern border. The suggestion that this group will threaten the economic wellbeing or safety of the most powerful nation in the world is a bold face lie. I understand the fear that that lie is intended to generate and I am sad that people are taken in by it. I live by faith and the unabashed belief that Americans (and America) are better than that. We can simultaneously provide for the care of refugees and the protection of the American public. To suggest otherwise diminishes the founding character and capacity by which our nation has so long endured and the courage and convictions of the faith traditions by which we live.

Our sacred texts declare that each person is made in the image of God and thereby possesses dignity worthy of respect, regardless of the person's status in society. Religious traditions across the time and space are united in teaching that hospitality to strangers. It is God's will and that we should always and everywhere be mindful of entertaining angel unawares. Some of us may entertain angels around our Thanksgiving tables. All of us will sit with the ancestors of former refugees and receive the blessings that were once extended to them. It's our turn to extend them to others.

I pray the best of God's blessing on you and the people you love,

Bill

*Rev. William P. Worley, PSE Conference Minister*