



2022 Clergy Convocation

Penn Central, Penn Northeast, Penn Southeast Conferences of
the United Church of Christ

May 3-5, 2022

Double-Tree Resort, Lancaster, PA

Phoenix Faith: Catching up with the Spirit of God

"The wind blows where it wills, and you can hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." (John 3: 8)

We know the saying "like a phoenix rising from its ashes" - and we know that from the burn out of recent years, we are ready for an image of life anew. Our Christian faith recognizes the cycle of life, death, and new life. It is the transformation of the Holy Spirit. At least, that's what we say. How do we encounter the Spirit of God? Is it elusive? Tangible? Nourishing? Challenging?

Our times of presentation and prayer will be facilitated by Rev. Cindy Garis ([see bio](#)). Come and explore our relationship with mysticism and contemplative prayer practices. In this time away, you will receive refreshment through rest, food, fellowship - and, yes, the Holy Spirit. This renewal will be accompanied by times for small group discussion, worship and personal free time.

You may already be familiar with spiritual practices and with other clergy, but this time apart will be restoring and renewing for you in body, mind and spirit.

We are blessed once again to have Byron Borger of Hearts & Minds Bookstore to offer book reviews and book sales at the event.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Tuesday, May 3

3:00 Registration

3:30 Welcome & Introductions

Connecting with God and One Another

"What Are You Doing Here?" - The Holy Spirit for Exhausted People

After a time of introduction and the practice of the Daily Examen, we will hear God ask us, what God asks Elijah (1 Kings 19): "What are you doing here?"

5:20 Book Review

5:30 Dinner

7:00 Presentation

**Whirlwinds and Wild Geese: Encountering the "beyond us" and beyond description
- a.k.a "I see dead people"**

We will take a brief look at mysticism and its history, and share our most mystical moments.

Prayer practice: Meditative Sit/Centering Prayer/Stillness

8:30 Evening Prayer

Wednesday, May 4

7:30 Breakfast

8:30 Meditative Music

9:00 Presentation - "Can these Bones Live?" - Reclaiming Mysticism

a.k.a. "Too woo-woo for you?"

We let the Valley of Dry Bones and the Transfiguration lead us to asking (and maybe answering) the questions, "Can these bones - my life, the church, the mystery - live?" How might we encounter Christ/Love and be changed, not just want to build a shrine? Prayer practice: Praying with Scripture

10:30 Book Review

Break 10:40

Connecting

OPTIONAL: Seeing the Holy Spirit in Scripture - view upcoming lectionary texts through the lens of fantasy (think Lord of the Rings) and share through story-telling improv.

Noon Lunch & Free Time

4:00 Book Review

4:10 Presentation - "Tongues of Fire" - being able to hear the good news

a.k.a. "Touch by an angel"

We look at the Spirit blowing at Pentecost and wonder how receptive we are to God's/Love's Breath/Spirit/Energy/Life/Source - how receptive are our churches and communities?

Prayer practice: Loving-Kindness Meditation

5:30 Dinner

7:00 Service of Word, Sacrament, and Healing Prayer

8:30 Social Gathering

Thursday, May 5

7:30 Breakfast

8:30 Meditative Music

9:00 Worship

9:30 Book Review

9:45 Presentation & Concluding Remarks - "Catching Breath:" Being Transformed

Romans 12 and John 20 guide us to being transformed into "Contemplatives in Action" (synod resolution).

We will explore ways Contemplative Spirituality can keep us "blowing with the wind" -restore in spirit and rising to new life. Prayer practice: Breath Prayer

11:30 Anointment & Adjournment

12:00 Lunch