



Sharing the Good News!

Penn Northeast Conference of the United Church of Christ

FOND MEMORIES OF SUMMER CHILDREN'S CHURCH CAMP

Nancy E. Azar, Associate Conference Minister

Cabin time, "flat on bunk", walking a labyrinth, morning vespers, Vesper Hill, the campfire, swimming, arts and crafts, fun and games, being a counselor in training, talking about God, making friends, silly songs, the Rec Barn, the swings, guest leaders, volleyball, the hiking trail, Johnny Appleseed song, watching kids grow in their faith, guiding light journal, bugs and camp creatures, Kum Ba Yah, the pond, the water slide, special and funny awards for campers and adults and much, much more!

All of the above are things which campers and counselors have named as memories they have about a PNEC summer children's church camp. For 22 years PNEC has sponsored a summer children's church camp. The camp has been known as Unit Camp, Unity Camp and then PNECommunity Camp. The camp has been blessed with faithful, skilled and talented directors through its years in existence: Ruth Laudermitch, Mindy Does, Jeff Wargo, Lynn Wallace, Patti Smith Hoyt, Kim Edelheiser, Vera Lovewell, Regina Mohr and Stan Sell. There have been a host of adult counselors, counselors in training and guest activity leaders from churches throughout PNEC.

Summer church camp has blessed many in PNEC with the opportunity to experience God in an outdoor setting; to learn about what it means to follow Jesus; and some attendees have even experienced a "call" to ministry because of their camping experiences.

Due to lack of enrollment and increased costs over several years, PNEC will not be sponsoring a children's summer church camp this year. This decision was not made lightly and is one that had been under consideration before I came on staff.

We are REALLY encouraging churches to encourage their children and youth to participate in church camping directly through Camp Mensch Mill in Alburdis. Camp Mensch Mill is a ministry of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference. The camp offers a multitude of camping options for varying age levels, including adults. Camps such as Horseback camp, Day camp, Christmas camp, H2O camp, Nature Explorers camp, a Scrapbooking and a Quilting Retreat. Local churches should have received brochures which list the 2010 Calendar of Events. The website for Mensch Mill is www.menschmill.org. Rev. Jeremy Force is the Managing Director of Mensch Mill.

Another UCC camp option is Hartman Center, which is a ministry of Penn Central Conference, located in Milroy, PA. Information on camping at Hartman Center is available at www.hartmancenter.com. Rev. Bruce Druckenmiller is the Managing Director of Hartman Center.

Praying that you will encourage people in your congregation to experience the joys of summer church camp! Praising God for all the campers, directors, leaders, and children who have been a part of a PNEC summer church camp! Pondering the possibility that children's summer camping in PNEC may take a new shape or form in the years ahead...*Nancy*

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