



## *Sharing the Good News!*

Penn Northeast Conference of the United Church of Christ

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See you in September for CHRISTIAN FORMATION!

*Nancy E. Azar, Associate Conference Minister*

It is that time of the year when CE committees and Christian educators and youth coordinators begin their frenzied pace to gear up for the kick-off of Sunday school and youth programs. Questions and laments abound...what curricula are we using? Do we have enough teachers? What are we doing for Rally Day? What supplies do we need to buy? We don't have enough kids anymore for the class! How will we start our youth group? Who are the leaders for the year? Who are our confirmands? Are they going to be taught by the pastor in a Sunday morning class? What do they need to know to be confirmed? And so on and so on the questions go. You can probably add your own to the list! Been there done that!

My hope and prayer is that by the time you read this most of those urgent questions will have been addressed. In fact my greater hope is that those questions would have already been asked in, dare I say it, May or June, so that planning for Sunday school, youth ministry and confirmation would take a long range view and not a last month approach.

In the list of questions above there are none about ADULT EDUCATION!!! That, too, is oh so typical of what happens at this time of the year....while Christian education for every other age group is being planned in the majority of cases the adults are left out! While I know there will be reasons you can give me for not having intentional education for adults I want to share with you some thoughts which I have gleaned from a wonderful book I am currently reading. ***Faith Formation in Vital Congregations, by Marian R. Plant, Anthony B. Robinson, series editor*** is

written particularly to address adult Christian Formation. Notice the words...Christian Formation... a CRITICAL AREA in the life and ministry of a local church who desires to teach, form and sustain believers...make disciples, and transform lives as it helps people to grow in their faith!!!

In the book, Anthony B. Robinson reminds us that culture has radically changed and can't be depended upon to do formation in the Christian faith, as it has in the past. It is now time for the church TO FACE THE CHALLENGE AND DISCOVER NEW WAYS TO DO BOTH CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION WITH ADULTS.

Also, author Marian R. Plant, caught my attention with this statement, "Jesus welcomed children and taught adults. We welcome adults and teach children. Someone's got this backwards, and I don't think it was Jesus." WOW – think about that statement and really let it sink in. All of Jesus' teachings were aimed at adults, shared with adults and lived out with adults!!! Plant also writes, "Jesus set the model for Christian formation's primary methodology – teaching and learning - and the original constituency was adults."

I HIGHLY recommend that those in the local church who are wanting to face and embrace the challenge and opportunity of shaping adult formation in a new way read this book.

**In fact, I challenge you to join me in a study group to go through the book together, do the exercises it suggests, answer the tough questions it asks and plan a framework for preparing the way forward in adult Christian formation...call me at the PNEC office or email me at [nancya@pnec.org](mailto:nancya@pnec.org) and we will work out the details of how to gather to share in the process with the wisdom offered in the book and the guidance of the Holy Spirit! (Or share with me your needs and on how to use this resource.)**

Growing in the faith...Nancy

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