

Christian Associates of Southwest Pennsylvania

Serving 10 Counties, 28 Church Bodies, 2,000 Congregations and 1,000,000 Christian Members

The Call . . .

On the Web: www.casp.org

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Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
Hicks Memorial Chapel - lower level
616 North Highland Avenue - Pittsburgh, PA 15206

to be one in Christ



September 2020, Number 4

A Unifying Voice in the Name of Jesus Christ for the Mission of the Gospel and the Wholeness of Communities

Anniversary Book and Online Jubilee Celebrate Fifty Years In Pursuit of Unity

Bringing together diverse voices from throughout our fifty-year history, this month Christian Associates publishes our anniversary book, *All One in Christ Jesus: Southwest Pennsylvania Celebrates Christian Unity*.

The book collects nearly 300 pages of sermons, essays, remembrances, hymns, and history. Some pieces come from our archives, while others were written especially for the volume. Together, they tell the story of this trailblazing ecumenical organization and capture our common hope for the unity that is ours in Christ.

Copies of the book may be downloaded at no charge from Christian Associates' website, casp.org/sermons. Printed copies are also available for \$17 each, plus \$3 shipping and handling; order on the website or by calling our office.

Plan to join us for an online **Jubilee Celebration and book launch party on Wednesday, September 30 at 7 p.m.** You can watch the party on our website, casp.org, on our Facebook page, [facebook.com/christianassociateswpa](https://www.facebook.com/christianassociateswpa), or on our YouTube channel, bit.ly/CASPYoutube.

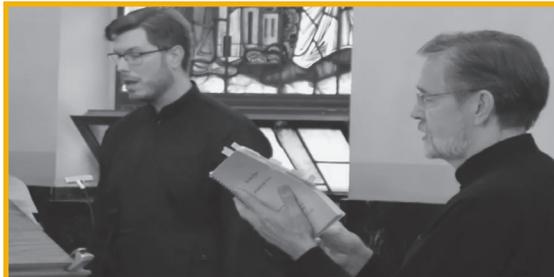
A virtual choir, composed of singers from all over Southwest Pennsylvania, will sing the winning hymn in our Jubilee Hymn Contest, directed by S.C. Toe. All voices are welcome; to join the choir, visit casp.org/virtualchoir before September 17.

Additional music for the Jubilee Celebration will be offered by the seminarians of Byzantine Theological Seminary, the Bruderhof communities, and the Rodman Street Missionary Baptist Church choir.

A free study guide to accompany the book is

also available at casp.org/sermons; the book is appropriate for use by congregational study and discussion groups.

The book is the third volume in *The Word in Our Voices* series, which collects topical sermons and essays by Christians from our region.



The Rodman Street Missionary Baptist Church choir (top) and the seminarians of Byzantine Catholic Seminary (left) will be among the featured musicians for our online Jubilee Celebration.

Voices of Unity: selected quotations from our anniversary book

"We cannot love what we do not know. Our sitting and praying together increased our knowledge of one another. Strangers became friends. Friends became brothers and sisters bound by our faith in Christ as our Savior."

- **Bishop Anthony Bosco**
Roman Catholic Diocese of Greensburg

"I feel especially privileged to be part of the work of [Christian] Associates, and I consider it a special blessing for my Church to participate in this endeavor of Christian fellowship, common witness, and mission toward the holy people of God in our area, and the community at large."

- **Metropolitan Maximos**
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh

"Meaningful effort must be put into pursuing Christian Unity. This is the effort that God is calling us to pursue in times of racism, sexism, and any other -ism. The reality is this cannot be done without the power and influence of the Holy Spirit."

- **The Rev. Dr. Jonathon Counts**
Homewood AME-Zion Church

"We are not Catholics or Anglicans or Orthodox or Presbyterians. We are only the Body of Christ. In spite of the centuries of chaos and martyrdom Christians have forced on other Christians in the name of Christ, nonetheless the divine activity of love which moves among the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is the core and grounding of our souls as human beings and the lifeblood of our community as a church."

- **Bishop Dorsey McConnell**
Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh

REFLECTIONS ALONG THE WAY

Dear friends,

Descend to the basement of Pittsburgh Presbytery, turn right at the inexplicable array of exercise equipment, turn left at the rows of abandoned desk chairs, and you will find the temporary home of Christian Associates' archives. In 39 mismatched boxes, the story of Christian unity in Southwest Pennsylvania unfolds in papers, scrapbooks, recordings, and photographs.

This year we celebrate half a century as Christian Associates, but our records extend back even earlier: to our predecessor organizations, like the Council of Churches of the Pittsburgh Area and even the Pittsburgh Sabbath School Union, which was founded in 1817. Our earliest documents are written by hand in elegant cursive, listing the meeting attendance and agenda items of people who lived through the Civil War.

Those early records describe organizations that were entirely Protestant, but by the late 1960s, in the wake of Vatican II, new connections between the Council of Churches and the Catholic Dioceses of Pittsburgh and Greensburg begin to emerge. Most of these meetings took place at ground level, but on occasion they happened in midair: one scrapbook includes the in-flight menu from a journey bringing the Rev. Lee Hicks, then director of the Council, to the Vatican in 1969, when the Catholic bishop of Pittsburgh became John Cardinal Wright.

In our deeds and decisions, our aspirations and alliances, we continue to write the history of the church in Southwest Pennsylvania.

By October of that year, the Council of Churches had voted to close its doors and transform into something new: Christian Associates of Southwest Pennsylvania, the first ecumenical agency in the United States to include Catholic churches in full membership. In 1970, Christian Associates held its first meetings of the Council of Bishops and Executives and the Board of Delegates. Meeting minutes upon meeting minutes ensue in the archives, for these governing bodies and for dozens of multiplying committees and task forces.

The archives tell some stories clearly and others less so. For discretion's sake, some matters are only hinted at by carefully worded formal documents; we'll never know all of the interpersonal friendships and quarrels our history might contain. At times our record-keeping has been less than complete: faces smile from unlabeled photographs, leaving us guessing at who's who. Our radio and television ministries were central programs for decades, but few audiovisual records survive. We have letters on file from our early directors but no emails from our more recent ones: paper is easier to keep.

As I have worked this summer to compile our anniversary volume and to summarize our history, I have imagined someone years from now descending into a basement and pulling our 50th anniversary book – or perhaps this very newsletter – out of a dusty box. I am reminded of the Gospel writers piecing together the story of Jesus, and of all the church historians since, drawing lessons from the past that shape the way we practice our faith.

"I love to tell the story," Kate Hankey wrote in her classic hymn. And even as we tell the stories of God at work in our history, we are also telling the continuing story with our lives each day. In our deeds and decisions, our aspirations and alliances, we continue to write the history of the church in Southwest Pennsylvania.

The story of our unity in Christ is only beginning. Let's make it a story worth telling.

Your sister in Christ,



The Rev. Liddy Barlow
Executive Minister

Christian Associates of Southwest PA



Roy Burford of the Pittsburgh Presbytery joins Liddy Barlow on the day the archives were moved to their current quarters.

*The story of our unity in Christ is only beginning.
Let's make it a story worth telling.*

Feeling Stuck? Pastoral Care Conference Explores Clergy Burnout

*Why do so many pastors and lay leaders feel fed up with the institutional church?
How can we rediscover our passion for ministry?*

Sociologist **Josh Packard** will keynote a conference exploring these questions on the morning of **Friday, October 9**. The event is an all-online version of the annual Pittsburgh Pastoral Care Conference and Beaver-Butler Presbytery's annual *Thriving Churches* event.

Packard is director of *The Dechurched Project* and an Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Northern Colorado. He is the co-author of *Church Refugees: Sociologists Reveal Why People Are Done With Church But Not Their Faith* (Group, 2015), which explores why previously-active church members step away from institutional religion.

Packard's current research project, *Stuck*, focuses on clergy who experience burn-out and disillusionment in the church, but feel compelled to stay in ministry because of worries about income loss or seminary debt, or who are reluctant to walk away from what once felt like a distinct life-calling.

The event will take place via Zoom, with opportunities for Q&A with Dr. Packard. Participants are invited to log in beginning at 8:45 a.m. with the event running from 9 a.m. until noon.

Pre-registration for the event is required and will be available at www.pghpc.org. The cost for the morning is \$10.



Keynote speaker Josh Packard



Be an Ally to Immigrants, Even Amid a Pandemic

COVID-19 has been a tremendous hardship to all of us, but it has been especially difficult for our immigrant and refugee neighbors.

On **Thursday, September 17**, join Christian Associates and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary via Zoom from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. for the third installment in our Allies in Faith series of learning experiences.

We will speak with local advocates for our newest neighbors, hear how COVID-19 has affected these populations, and learn how we and our communities can be effective allies and help meet their needs. You do not need to have attended either of the earlier seminars to attend this one.

The program is free but registration is required; visit <https://www.pts.edu/Allies-in-Faith-2021> to sign up.



Campaign for Power Encourages All Eligible Citizens To Register and Vote

As part of the "Campaign for Power" sponsored by the Black Political Empowerment Project (B-PEP) and 53 other faith and community organizations, Christian Associates wants to ensure every eligible voice is heard in November.

Because of the pandemic, the safest option is to vote by mail. We ask all religious leaders to encourage everyone to register to vote, apply for a mail-in ballot, and cast your ballot as soon as possible: **VOTE EARLY – BY MAIL**. You can share this message from the pulpit at the close of online or in-person worship services, in your bulletin or newsletter, and through your church's social media.

For the most up-to-date information about voting in Pennsylvania, visit votespa.com. For nonpartisan infographics and other informational resources, visit the League of Women Voters, lwvpg.org.



The Campaign for Power will use 17 billboards throughout Allegheny County to encourage voting.

50 YEARS . . . in Pictures



In 2004, Executive Director Pastor Don Green accompanied the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra to Rome, where they played a concert at the Vatican to commemorate Pope (now Saint) John Paul II's 25th anniversary of election to the papacy and his lifelong ecumenical and interfaith outreach to Muslims, Christians, and Jews. *Left to right: Pastor Green, Bishop (now Cardinal) Donald Wuerl, Pope St. John Paul II.*

Christian Associates' Theology & Education Committee sponsored theological consultations in the 1990s. John Dominic Crossan, second from left, keynoted the 1993 consultation. Other members of the committee pictured included Rev. Dr. James Davison (*far left*), Metropolitan Maximos (*center*), Pastor Robert Hawk (*second from right*), and Msgr. Roger Statnick (*far right*).



In 1996, seminarian Andrew Deskevich (now the Very Rev.) operates a camera in the Christian Associates TV studio.



In the 1970s, staff and volunteers from Christian Associates' Teacher Learning Center offered trainings for Christian educators throughout our region, serving thousands of teachers every year.



Current Council of Bishops & Executives members Rev. Craig Kephart and Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi share conversation over coffee during the 2019 300 Cups of Coffee project.

Jubilee Celebration Sponsors

Many thanks to these judicatories, congregations, organizations, and individuals for helping make these 50th anniversary celebrations possible. To join these friends in helping to ensure Christian Associates' ministries continue to flourish in the next half-century, please visit www.casp.org/donate.

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ECUMENICAL EVENTS

Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry Program

412-232-5815

pittsburghmercy.org/faith-communities/

Foundations of Faith Community

Nursing Course

Dates: Fri. and Sat., Oct. 2 and 3; Sat., Oct. 17, Fri. and Sat. Oct. 23 and 24

Location: online via Zoom

Cost: \$395 for registered nurses, including textbook, course materials, certificate with pin, and 39.25 nursing CE's. \$200 for lay persons.

This course prepares nurses to serve as faith community nurses and others – including license practical nurses, social workers, and clergy – to serve as health ministers. Course modules include spiritual care, self-care, healing & whole-person health, behavioral health, assessment & accessing resources, and more!

Applications due Sept. 25; visit pittsburghmercy.org/faith-communities/education/#foundations-of-faith-community-nursing-course to download the application.

Olmsted Manor Retreat Center

17 East Main St.

Ludlow, PA 16333

814-945-6512

www.olmstedmanor.org

Photography Retreat: I Wonder as a Wander – Exploring the Wonder and Joy of Nature Photography

Dates: Wed.-Fri., Oct. 14-16

Leader: Rev. Dean Ziegler

Cost: \$200, includes 2 nights accommodations and 6 meals

Common in children everywhere, wonder too often goes to sleep in adulthood. We can make wonder a habit once again and rediscover its importance as a deep well of spiritual insight, daily discovery, creativity, and productivity.

This retreat, in the height of fall foliage season, explores the surprising body & brain effects of exposure to the natural world while teaching simple and effective photo skills. All levels of photography experience are welcome; a smartphone is sufficient equipment.

Blessed Be Educators

www.facebook.com/BlessedBeEducators

Educator Forum: You Can't Afford Not to Care about Violence

Date: Sat., Oct. 10, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Location: online via Zoom

Fee: None; free-will offering accepted.

Violence knows no boundaries. It affects individuals, families and communities; and impacts us emotionally, spiritually and economically. The current pandemic, with its accompanying tension, could intensify certain types of violence and our responses to it.

This workshop kicks off a three-part series and is co-sponsored by Black Women for Positive Change and the Homewood Ministerium. Forums are approved for PA Act 48 professional development hours. No fee but free-will offering accepted.

Pre-registration required. Contact Mary Ann Hvizdos mahvizdos@verizon.net or 412-807-1611 for more information.

Spiritual Direction & Leadership Program—Pneuma Institute

Pneuma, a two-year, graduate certificate program in spiritual direction and spiritual leadership, offers educational and supervised training of pastors and laity in an ecumenical context. *Now accepting applications for the 2021-2023 cohort.* For more info, join our virtual Come & See, Oct. 10, 2020, 9:30 a.m.-noon. Contact us for the Zoom Link.



Dr. Martha Robbins, Director
412-897-1620
mrobbins@pts.edu
www.pneumainstitute.com



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Claiming Pentecost: New Beginnings in a Post-Pandemic Church

Oct. 8, 15, 22, 29, Nov. 5 and 12, 2020

Paul Rhebergen and Jan Nolting Carter, Transitional Pastors, PC(USA)
(meets the Art of Transitional Ministry, Week 2 requirements)

The Four Women Doctors of the Church: Teresa of Ávila, Catherine of Siena, Thérèse of Lisieux, and Hildegard of Bingen

Oct. 25-Nov. 20, 2020
Sr. Kathleen Flood, OP

Thinking about the Future of Your Church: Scenario Planning Post-Pandemic

Nov. 9-Dec. 11, 2020
James Downey, Senior Strategy Consultant, PTS

W. Don McClure Lectures in World Mission and Evangelism and World Mission Initiative Month of Mission Series

Jesus Christ and the 'Dividing Wall': Race and God's Mission

Oct. 7, 14, 21, and 28, 2020, 7:30 p.m. (ET)

The Rev. Dr. Brenda Salter McNeil, author, professor, and thought-leader;
The Rev. Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, Baptist minister and spiritual writer;
and David Campt, speaker and facilitator



www.pts.edu/CE 412-924-1345 ConEd@pts.edu



INTER-PRESBYTERY LEADERSHIP

Education & Enrichment for Ruling Elders in the PC(USA)

There are three components to this four semester program:

- Courses in Bible, Reformed Theology, & Worship
- Workshops in Pastoral Care, Ethics, Preaching...
- Field Education/Practicums



If you feel God is calling you to further leadership in the PC(USA), please call or email for further information.

Redstone Presbytery
724-837-6737 secretary@redstonepresbytery.org
Washington Presbytery
724-222-1500 office@washingtonpresbytery.org



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Host a Census Sabbath While It Still Counts

Time is running short to complete the federal census. The new census deadline is September 30 and over 20% of Pennsylvania households still need to be counted!

For every person left uncounted, Pennsylvania loses \$2,000 per year in federal funding that supports our schools, roads, health centers, food assistance, and much more.

Clergy can help spread the word about the importance of the census, affirming that all people are made in God's image and deserve to be counted. We invite you to select an upcoming Sunday in September as a Census Sabbath. (The date can be flexible: choose a week that works for you!). On your Census Sabbath, you might:

- Incorporate the census into your sermon. A toolkit with examples is available at <https://www.faithinpubliclife.org/censusabbath>
- Download graphics at www.casp.org/censusgraphics to insert in your bulletin, newsletter, or worship PowerPoint.
- Post on social media about why we should all be counted.

Sofa Spirituality Brings Connection To Your Living Room

Spiritual isolation harms the human spirit. It divides our communities, it alienates religious traditions from one another, and it disconnects us from the Divine.

Sofa Spirituality, Christian Associates' dialogue project with the JCC's *Center for Loving Kindness*, works to defeat isolation by fostering spiritual connection and bridging our real and perceived differences.

Now, *Sofa Spirituality* is offering customized dialogues for all sorts of faith-based groups. You can select any of our video interviews to form the basis of a 45-minute conversation, which we will facilitate – with your shared leadership if you choose – at no cost. We would also be happy to facilitate a series of dialogues with your community, or to help pair your congregation with another house of worship, perhaps from a tradition very different from your own.

Would you like to share *Sofa Spirituality* with your study group, confirmation class, book club, neighborhood ministerium, or other group? Simply email lbarlow@casp.org and we'll help you get started!