

Christian Associates of Southwest Pennsylvania

Serving 10 Counties, 29 Church Bodies, 2,000 Congregations and 1,000,000 Christian Members

The Call . . .

On the Web: www.casp.org

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 5241, Pittsburgh, PA 15206

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

Hicks Memorial Chapel - lower level

616 North Highland Avenue - Pittsburgh, PA 15206

to be one in Christ



September/October/November 2026, Number 4

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

Stand Up for All Neighbors During United Against Hate Week

This year, the Stand for All Pittsburgh coalition is celebrating United Against Hate Week October 18-24. Discover a calendar full of opportunities to affirm belonging for all and to raise awareness about the harmful impacts of hate and bias: visit unitedagainsthateweek.org/events-calendar-pa.

Here are just a few of the events in store:

On **Sunday, October 18** at 2:30 p.m. at the Point Park University Center (414 Wood St, Pittsburgh 15222), be among the first to view the brand-new film "Minnesota Neighbors." The newest documentary from Not In Our Town, the film tells the story of how ordinary people in Minneapolis came together last winter during the ICE surge. After the screening, meet filmmaker Patrice O'Neill and hear from a panel of local leaders supporting immigrants in Southwest Pennsylvania.

On **Monday, October 19**, attend a press conference at noon on the portico of Pittsburgh's City-County Building to help share the message of United Against Hate Week with the wider community. Comments from elected officials and representatives of cultural and faith-based organizations will start the week off strong.

On **Sunday, October 25**, join in the best Love Anyway Feast yet! Details are still being confirmed at press time, but you can expect to enjoy a fully-catered meal in unique surroundings, participating in dialogue with neighbors across difference. Watch casp.org for sign-up information.

And these events are just the beginning! The week also features prayer vigils, panel discussions, an interfaith field trip (see page 8), a sermon workshop (see page 3), and so much more.



Members of Stand for All Pittsburgh at Pittsburgh City Council chambers in 2025.

Consider adding your own event, large or small. Check out the toolkits at unitedagainsthateweek.org for ideas, and then add your event to the calendar by clicking the green "submit event" button.

Christian Associates is a member of Stand for All Pittsburgh, a coalition that mobilizes the community of southwestern Pennsylvania to prevent, identify, and address bias and hate incidents to create safety, inclusion and belonging for all.

'Hands Together' Matches Congregations with Volunteers for Advent Giving

For many around our region, Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera's *A Musical Christmas Carol* is a holiday tradition. In Charles Dickens' tale, the miser Scrooge must learn Christmas charity in time to bring joy once again to his heart and to save Tiny Tim.

Let's bring that same spirit of joy and caring to Southwest Pennsylvania this holiday season. One of the ways you can join us is by attending our **Hands Together III** event on Thursday, October 29, beginning at 1 pm. The event will be hosted by Pittsburgh Presbytery, 901 Allegheny Avenue in Pittsburgh's Northside.



Participants at the July "Hands Together" event.

The Advent season is a time for Angel Trees, free meals, and other endeavors which bring God's hope to our neighbors. Our goal is to connect those who need

opportunities to be of service with those who need resources or volunteers. Of course, we also are looking to plan farther ahead and network to meet people's needs throughout the year!

Our previous Hands Together events have yielded abundant fruit in jump-starting giving ministries in congregations and in providing streams of material and volunteer power for established caring ministries. We hope you'll become part of this growing movement to make our area a more abundant place for all. Register to attend October's event at casp.org/handstogether.

REFLECTIONS ALONG THE WAY

Dear friends,

I loved absolutely everything about the John 17 Awards Afternoon Tea that Christian Associates hosted on August 30. I loved the opportunity to recognize Bishop David Zubik and Bishop Kurt Kusserow for their longtime service to church and community. I loved seeing a room full of ecumenical and interfaith colleagues greeting old friends, making new connections, and enjoying each other's company. And I absolutely loved the scones with clotted cream and the petit fours!

Best of all, though, was the opportunity to absorb the wisdom of our honorees. Pittsburgh Theological Seminary President the Rev. Dr. Asa Lee moderated a conversation between the two bishops, drawing out the ideas that shaped their ministry. In his remarks, Bishop Kurt Kusserow introduced a metaphor that I found particularly apt:

"I've long held a vision for unity that is available to us tangibly to see and to experience all the time, and that is the image of a symphony orchestra," he said. The instruments in the orchestra are vastly different from one another, from a tiny piccolo to an enormous bass violin, from a brash trumpet to a soft clarinet. Each musician, understandably, thinks her own instrument is the best of all.

"But here's the thing," Bishop Kusserow continued. Before a concert begins, the symphony musicians come on stage and begin to warm up, as the audience is arriving. Each one of these players is a virtuoso, bringing years of study and practice to his instrument. And yet, the sound of the group warming up together is cacophony. Notes clash and compete. It's not music; it's just noise.

At last the concert is ready to begin. The bishop continued, *"The concertmaster comes out, and everybody claps, and the conductor comes out, and everybody claps, and then it's dead quiet. If there is a dream for unity that I carry, it's what happens the moment after that dead quiet, when the conductor raises the baton, and now everyone is playing the same thing. Each part is still different. But they're playing together."*

Rivalry turns into cooperation. The sounds of individual instruments become the sound of one, unified ensemble. In melody and harmony, the symphony takes shape.

"I'm not sure that we can make that happen," Bishop Kusserow said. Unity is God's gift to us, not something that we can force through our own efforts. *"But I think we ought to be ready for when it does happen, to receive it with joy and to play with gusto."*

May each one of us, holding our separate instruments, keep an eye on our Conductor as he raises his baton, cuing us in turn, adjusting our volume, refining our tuning, and turning our separate noise into cohesive music. Sharing the gifts given to each of us, at Christ's direction we can rejoice in a still greater gift: the gift of unity.



Photo by Brian Cohen



Your sister in Christ,

The Rev. Liddy Barlow
Executive Minister

Edwin & Danison Lee, members of the St. Andrew Kim Youth Trio, performing at the John 17 Awards Afternoon Tea event on August 30. For more information on the group, visit sites.google.com/view/standrewkimyouthtrio

Bring Light to a Lonely Place: Give Bibles to Neighbors in Immigrant Detention

For immigrants detained at the Moshannon Valley Processing Center, a Spanish-language Bible is a sign of God's love and hope when it is most needed.

Will you help us provide Bibles for our Spanish-speaking neighbors at Moshannon?



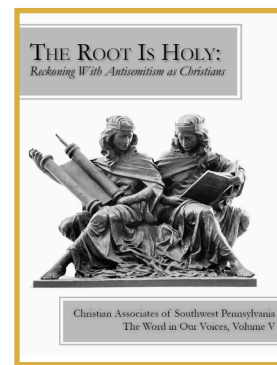
Rev. Liddy Barlow with Sr. Janice Vanderneck

Sister Janice Vanderneck of Casa San Jose is an authorized religious visitor at Moshannon, and she will hand-deliver Bibles to immigrants detained there.

All donations received for this campaign will be used exclusively to support the purchase of Spanish-language Bibles. Visit casp.org/donate to give via PayPal, and be sure to add "Spanish Bibles" to the Special Instructions line.

New Book and Workshops Explore Reckoning from the Pulpit

Have you picked up a copy of *The Root Is Holy: Reckoning with Antisemitism as Christians?* Christian Associates' collection of 26 sermons and essays by local Christian leaders addresses the legacy of antisemitism in the Christian tradition and reimagines new and life-giving ways to relate to our Jewish neighbors. Copies of the book are still available in print and as a PDF download; request yours today at casp.org/reckoning.



This fall, Christian Associates and the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh will offer two opportunities to hear from the preachers represented in *The Root Is Holy*. We will be gathering on Zoom on **October 20 at 10 a.m.** and in-person at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Highland Park on **November 18 at noon** to learn from these authors about their sermon development process, with an eye towards encouraging you to give a similar sermon at your church this year. Registration is available now at casp.org/reckoning.

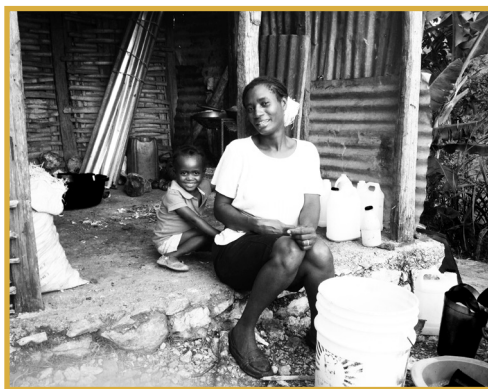
Haiti Hope to Opportunity Celebrates 20 Years of Sharing Love of Christ in Word and in Deed

Contributed by Haiti H2O Staff

Haiti H2O: Hope to Opportunity is a Pittsburgh-based non-profit partnering with rural Haitian churches to invest in Haitian-led solutions through construction, agriculture, healthcare, and micro-business projects.

For 20 years, Haiti H2O has equipped local churches in Haiti to share the love of Christ with their neighbors, in word and deed. The pastors and church leaders share their vision and Haiti H2O helps to provide resources to bring those hopes to real opportunities.

Construction: For many years, Haiti H2O brought mission teams to work alongside Haitian contractors and community members to help build schools, churches, homes and sanitation projects. Now, with travel to Haiti more difficult, HH2O's Haitian staff coordinate with local leaders to complete projects, such as the building of a school in Melonière and school bathrooms in St. Martin, and rebuilding homes after natural disasters. These projects are small, but are a practical way for the local church to care for their neighbors.



Agriculture: In partnership with Earth Interwoven, Haiti H2O launched hands-on agroforestry training for farmers in Bassin Caiman earlier this year. By integrating trees and crops, this technique helps soil retain moisture and nutrients while reversing deforestation. Toto is managing one new nursery with over 300 fast-fruiting trees, including papaya, which will provide food and stabilize the soil.

Healthcare: For five years, Haiti H2O's mobile medical clinics have partnered with three village churches to

provide essential care where there are no doctors. The local church hosts HH2O's team of Haitian doctors and nurses to offer primary care, prenatal and well-child check-ups, and vital medications to reduce preventable diseases. The impact continues to expand: from 664 patient visits in 2023 to 1,500 in 2025, with plans to add another village church location by the end of 2026.

Micro-business: Over the years, HH2O has provided seed funding for two bakeries and a corn grinding business. Currently, Haitian staff are launching business skills training for those seeking to support their families with microbusiness ideas.

On **October 29**, Haiti H2O will mark two decades of partnership at its 20th Anniversary Celebration at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. You are invited to enjoy an evening of Haitian cuisine and hear directly from Associate Director Max Touloute about what's happening in Haiti and upcoming initiatives.

Be part of transformative change in Haiti: haitih2o.org

Inaugural John 17 Awards Honor Bishops Emeriti Kusserow, Zubik

Over a hundred supporters of Christian unity gathered at Shadyside Presbyterian Church on August 30 for the inaugural John 17 Awards Afternoon Tea. With tea and treats, great conversation, and encounters with old friends and new, the event was not only an occasion to celebrate unity, but also a time truly to experience it! Bishop Emeritus David A. Zubik of the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh and Bishop Emeritus

Kurt F. Kusserow of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod ELCA received the first-ever John 17 Awards, and shared their wisdom in a moderated discussion with Pittsburgh Theological Seminary President the Rev. Dr. Asa J. Lee.

Conversations are already beginning about the next John 17 Awards Afternoon Tea; we hope to see you there.

“You know, when we look at each other, we don’t see differences to be overcome or arguments to be won, but we say, ‘We are already family. We belong together. We are incomplete without each other.’”

—Bishop Kurt Kusserow



“I think we have to remember that we’re all pilgrims. We’re on a journey together to God’s kingdom in heaven. We’ve got to look for the ways in which we join our hands and hearts to be able to do that...”

—Bishop David Zubik



"A lifetime of small, faithful, steady steps toward one another eventually builds a strong bridge that is enough for the whole community to cross."

—The Rev. Dr. Tom Harmon

"Every person in this room has an opportunity to be the bridge."

—The Rev. Dr. Asa Lee



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Cantate Usquam Pilgrim Singers Seek Opportunities, New Members



Cantate Usquam means “sing anywhere,” and this group of volunteers is ready to do just that! The mission of the Cantate Usquam Pilgrim Singers is to bring music to churches that don’t have choirs or the resources to sing at their regular services.

The Cantate Usquam Pilgrim Singers are led by musicians who have experience leading congregations and choirs in singing. The group will work with you to sing hymns and music from your tradition and can sing choir pieces for a prelude, offertory, or communion—though their participation is done from congregant seating, not up front. Cantate Usquam volunteers love to sing *a capella* but can also use available instruments. The group is now available for dates in 2027, excluding Holy Week or Easter.

The group also invites new members—volunteers will sing 5-6 times in the fall and again in the spring. Cantate Usquam holds one rehearsal in the city’s Oakland neighborhood before each Sunday performance.

To learn more about joining or booking a date, contact Michael Salmon (oriolefish@gmail.com / 904-718-7622) or Penny Anderson (penny_anderson@fastmail.fm / 412-310-9167).

Join 'Amen to Action' Volunteers in Feeding Your Neighbors This Thanksgiving

Four weekends, fourteen sites, thousands of volunteers: one million meals for our neighbors! Spend a morning this November alongside your many neighbors of faith and goodwill as together we pack a million meals for the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank.



Amen to Action, an initiative of the Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation, is signing up volunteers now for its ninth annual service events. The events take place on Saturday mornings as well as the Friday after Thanksgiving at host institutions across the region. Host sites are located in Allegheny, Beaver, Mercer, Washington, and Westmoreland counties. Visit plf.org/a2a to sign up.

Pittsburgh F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Luncheon Honors Late Pastor Jeff Leake



The late Pastor Jeff Leake

Pittsburgh F.R.I.E.N.D.S. has dedicated its annual Legends Award Luncheon to the late Pastor Jeff Leake, a co-founder of the organization.

Pastor Leake served as lead pastor of Allison Park Church for 35 years until his untimely death in February 2026. A widely respected religious figure, he mentored many local clergy members and enthusiastically participated in ecumenical work throughout the region. He authored five books and helped plant over 30 churches.

The luncheon will take place Friday, **October 30** at Le Mont restaurant on Mount Washington; tickets are \$45 each, or \$360 for a table of eight. Register online at pittsburghfriends.com/events or call 412-856-9099 for more information.

Pittsburgh F.R.I.E.N.D.S. is a multicultural, relational network of leaders building bridges between communities by empathy and enjoyment.

Your Vote Matters

The League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh encourages *all* citizens to engage in the public sphere and actively participate in elections as informed voters. Vote your values on Nov 3, 2026.

Nonpartisan election and candidate information and voting resources for the upcoming election are available at our webpage, lwvpgh.org/community.

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We've welcomed Rev. Don Coleman, (pictured) pastor of Canonsburg United Presbyterian Church, to offer spiritual direction and clergy coaching through our Caring for Clergy and Congregations program. Please call us to schedule with Don.



The Rev. Dr. Graham Standish, PhD, MDiv, MSW, MA, Executive Director, CCC Director



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**SEPT 19
2026**

F.N.B. STADIUM | GATES OPEN 12 PM

For a fun day the whole family can enjoy while growing in faith, check out the FestPGH music and arts festival on Saturday, September 19, 2026, in F.N.B. Stadium. FestPGH offers family activities for all ages, games, art, and opportunities for service. Bishop Eckman will celebrate Mass. The event is free but requires an RSVP and digital ticket.

FestPGH.org



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SUPPORTING TODAY'S CHURCH LEADERS

Register now to join us for the following events!

Pastor and Ministry Leaders Appreciation: Faithfully Forward: Leading Through Generational and Cultural Change - with Dr. Almeda Wright, and Dr. Lee Kricher, Oct. 8, 2026

W. Don McClure Lecture and World Mission Initiative Conference: Won't You Be My Neighbor? The Cost of Being Neighborly in the 21st Century - with Dr. Ruth Padilla DeBorst, Oct. 16-17, 2026, In Person and Online

Archaeology Lecture: Recent Discoveries at Nimrud and Nineveh in Iraq - with Dr. Michael Danti, Oct. 22, 2026, In Person and Online

Metro-Urban Institute's 35th Anniversary Celebration: Facing the Future with Faith: Imagining a Just World for All - Oct. 23, 2026, Intensive Course with Dr. Obery M. Hendricks Jr., 6:00 p.m. Banquet

Praying in Color Workshop - with the Rev. Dr. L. Roger Owens, Oct. 24, 2026



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'We Have to Talk' Interfaith Field Trip Series Continues This Fall

Remember the fun of a school field trip: discovering a new place, learning through action, and having fun with friends? The **We Have to Talk** Interfaith Field Trip series brings that energy to our interfaith relationship-building. Throughout the year, spiritual leaders meet to explore local landmarks, sharing in dialogue along the way.

All spiritual leaders, clergy or lay, are welcome to participate in our upcoming field trips.

On **October 22**, we'll meet at the City of Pittsburgh Police Training Academy for a conversation with the **FBI's Pittsburgh Field Office**. During United Against Hate Week, we'll discover the threats that hate-fueled violence poses to houses of worship, and discover ways we



Participants explored religious and cultural sites in Pittsburgh's Hill District in September.

can keep our own communities, and our neighbors', safe.

On **November 17 at 9:30 a.m.**, we'll tour the **Pittsburgh Buddhist Center** in Allison Park. Meet the monks who established this sanctuary, and learn more about the diverse community that finds peace and meaning there.

Registration for these fall events is available now at casp.org/wehavetotalk.

The series continues in 2027. Discover a mosque, explore the implications of artificial intelligence, and so much more! Dates and details will be announced in the months to come.

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