

Christian Associates of Southwest Pennsylvania

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The Call . . .

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Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
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to be one in Christ



June/July/August 2022, Number 3

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

Anglican Diocese Elects New Bishop

Finding consensus on its first ballot, the Anglican Diocese of Pittsburgh has elected its next bishop, **the Rev. Alex Cameron**. He will be consecrated on August 6 at Church of the Ascension in Oakland.

Bishop-Elect Cameron comes to Pittsburgh from Chicago, where since 2015 he has led the Isaiah Forty Foundation, an international nonprofit offering conferences, counseling, and coaching.

He grew up in Canada, and has served congregations in Montreal, Vermont, and Chicago. He has also had a career in business, working in medical informatics for General Electric and as a consultant.

He and his wife Tamara have four adult children and three grandchildren.



“I’m excited to welcome Bishop-Elect Cameron to our Council of Bishops & Judicatory Executives,” said Rev. Liddy Barlow. “His varied experience, pastoral sensibility, and evident wisdom will be a

tremendous asset to the Anglican Diocese of Pittsburgh, and to our ministry together as Christian Associates.”

In his response to the diocese’s written questions, Bishop-Elect Cameron reflected on how to seek unity in a diverse diocese: reflections that apply, as well, to ecumenical work. “Bridging cultural gaps is not easy,” he wrote. “Drawing diverse cultures will generate conflict. But in the conflict there are opportunities to love, to submit to one another out of reverence to Christ. The resolution of the conflict is not found in becoming culturally monolithic or homogenous. It is found, I think, in the vision of Revelation 7, that we all come together in common worship, common prayer.”

Christian Associates Welcomes Sabbatical Supply Acting Executive Minister



This summer, **the Rev. Linda Miller-Pretz** will take on a three-month assignment as Christian Associates’ Sabbatical Supply Acting Executive Minister.

Beginning June 6, Rev. Liddy Barlow will enjoy a sabbatical after eight years of service. Rev. Miller-Pretz will serve in her stead, ensuring Christian Associates’

ministries continue uninterrupted throughout the summer.

Rev. Miller-Pretz is familiar with Christian Associates: she currently serves as proxy representative to the Council of Bishops & Executives for the United Church of Christ, and previously participated in the Theology & Education Committee.

This year, Rev. Miller-Pretz celebrates the 30th anniversary of her ordination; she has served as a congregational pastor, a retirement community chaplain, and as an Associate Conference Minister. She grew up in Millvale and now lives in Zelienople.

Rev. Miller-Pretz and her husband Joel have three adult daughters and seven grandchildren.

You can reach Rev. Miller-Pretz at lmillerpretz@casp.org.

Rev. Barlow will return to her desk on September 19, full of fresh energy and ideas, and immensely grateful for this gift of sabbath renewal.

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Pittsburgh Prays: Imagine a City United in Praise

Pastor Matt Geppert, president of SEAPC (the South East Asia Prayer Center, an international ministry based in Oakmont), has a vision to share. Hear it in his own words:

On July 10, 2022, I plan to be sitting inside Pittsburgh's Heinz Field stadium on the north shore of the Allegheny River, weeping with joy. I hope that I am joined by tens of thousands of praying friends representing every facet of this city's Church. I'd love to witness a city submitting gratefully to answered prayers as we turn the page on the pandemic and turn to each other for the hope of our collective future in Christ. Can you imagine this with me?



photo credit, Stephen W. Adams

If all we do on July 10 is humbly say the Lord's prayer in unison, then we have accomplished more than enough in the eyes of God. Prayer, simple and sincere in a shared vision, with worship in our hearts, will make way for God's glory — that is, His goodness and compassion — to move in us and through us on that day.

And as we see our churches filling in each

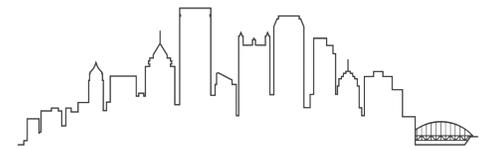
section of that stadium, resting and rejoicing in the place of agreement with God and each other, we will understand and rise in the much-needed revelation that "nothing is impossible." From that place of strength and security in Christ, the heavy burdens of poverty, inequity, sickness, insecurity, and idolatry that isolate and divide our peoples today will be lifted from our shoulders as we take hold of the witness in our spirit to meet any need.

Now is the time for you and your congregation to catch this vision and join in Pittsburgh Prays, an initiative of the Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation and SEAPC.

On **Sunday, July 10 at 2 p.m.**, Christians of all traditions will gather at Heinz Field for an experience of worship and prayer.

Led by an intentionally diverse group of pastors and musicians, representing many different Christian traditions, we will offer thanks to God for bringing us through the pandemic, and we will strengthen our relationships with one another as members of the body of Christ.

You can learn more and sign up as an individual or as a congregation by visiting pittsburghprays.com.



PITTSBURGH PRAYS

Juneteenth: Reparations and People of Faith

by Rev. Erin Jones

On **Sunday, June 19**, all are invited to join the people of Bethel AME in the Hill District as they continue their fight for reparations, working to reclaim the land where their ancestors worshiped.

Throughout the past few months, Rev. Dale Snyder and an ecumenical team of supporters have been traveling around the city of Pittsburgh to tell the story of Bethel, and how their land and building—an edifice of hope built overlooking downtown—was taken away and destroyed under the guise of “eminent domain” for the building of the Civic Arena in the 1950s.

These “Table Talks” have awakened many to the history of Bethel and to how racism in Pittsburgh has often been lived out through bureaucracy and in the name of “progress.”

On Juneteenth, we come together to take another step in the journey toward repentance and repair.

The day will be filled with learning, dialogue, and worshipping together, across racial and denominational lines, to build

up the body of Christ and seek to heal where it has been broken.

All are welcome to join for a worship service at Bethel's current site (2720 Webster Ave, Pittsburgh 15219) at 11am, with Bishop E. Earl McCloud, Jr. preaching, and a unity choir leading in music. Then we'll hear from local



Bethel AME's sanctuary in Uptown, demolished in 1957 to make way for the Civic Arena.

Christian leaders about what reparations mean to them in their context, and their hope for what repair looks like in Christ's church.

A panel of local pastors will discuss how their communities are committed to the work on a congregational and individual level.

Then we will caravan down to the site of Old Bethel for a time of prayer and blessing of the land, as we continue to seek its return to the people of Bethel.

Participants may join in person or online. Sign up by visiting: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/juneteenth-reparations-and-people-of-faith-tickets-333652542737>

A New Face Joins Christian Associates' Office

In March, Christian Associates welcomed a new Executive Administrative Assistant, **Erin Lane**.

Erin originally hails from Lancaster, Pennsylvania. After completing her undergraduate degree from Millersville University, she moved to Pittsburgh in 2014 to complete her Master of Library Information Science degree from the University of Pittsburgh.

Once here, she fell in love with the sprawling city, the Pittsburgh Penguins, and her now husband (in that order). Today, they live in Sharpsburg with their three children, three cats and little dog Neko. Erin is the President of the Sharpsburg Environmental Advisory Committee and an Auxiliary Member of the Sharpsburg Volunteer Fire Department.

Erin has a diverse background serving a variety of non-profit and educational organizations. Unsurprisingly, she has worked in several libraries, and also served in KEYS Service Corps AmeriCorps as an afterschool instructor. She was later hired



Erin Lane, left, takes over administrative duties from Michele Perry, right.

by Rankin Christian Center as the Youth Program director where she ran the After School, Youth of the Nation, and summer camp programs, overseeing more than 100 at-risk children and teens from ages 5 to 21. During her tenure, she revitalized the Center's library into a more up-to-date library and homework space, as well as earning over \$60,000 in grant funds for the various programs.

She moved on to work as a Supportive Service Coordinator for Pennrose Property Management where she assisted Senior tenants in connecting to resources, such as medication delivery, utility/rental assistance, food stamps, food pantries, and transportation services. Erin enjoys helping people by connecting them to resources that will help them achieve their personal goals.

Erin Lane will be in the office on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., and remotely throughout the day on the other weekdays. Her responsibilities will include reception, hospitality, insurance, HR functions, and managing advertisements and event postings for *The Call*.

"I'm so excited to have Erin working with us," said Rev. Liddy Barlow. "Her sunny spirit and organizational acumen are terrific additions to our office. Together we will do great things!"



Foundation of HOPE Receives \$1.3 Million to Support Aftercare

On January 26, Governor Tom Wolf announced that of the \$23 million dollars in grant funds allocated for 25 various projects to stop gun and group violence, \$1.3 million will be allocated to Christian Associates' partner in ministry: the Foundation of HOPE.

Specifically, the grant supports HOPE's aftercare program, which matches people returning from incarceration with informational resources, support groups, mentors, material assistance, and employment guidance. Aftercare supports people who are returning from county jails as well as state and federal prison.

"The state support will enable Foundation of HOPE to expand its core offerings in significant ways to help many more people in our region," said board chair Jay Gilmer.

The funding for these projects originates from the American Rescue Plan and is administered by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency through the Violence Intervention and Prevention Grant program.

Foundation of HOPE is an interfaith ministry, incubated and nurtured by Christian Associates in the '00s, that today includes five program areas: chaplaincy, pre-release, aftercare, adult diversion, and youth diversion.

This grant funding is essential in continuing the Foundation of HOPE's mission of "empowering people impacted by the criminal justice system to renew their faith, rebuild their lives, and restore positive relationships" by providing the means to

assist individuals in their reentry to society and break the cycle of reincarceration.

"We are looking to establish our aftercare work, including our weekly support community for returning citizens, in additional communities around Allegheny County," Jay Gilmer added. "Please contact us if you'd like to learn more." You can email aftercare director Keith Kondrich at kkondrich@foundationofhope.org for more details.



HOPE aftercare participants receive furniture for their new apartments from The Blessing Board.

Save the Date Now for Exciting Fall Events!

Saturday, October 8 *Sowing Food Justice— Why the Farm Bill Matters to Ending Hunger:*

the 2022 Southwest PA *Bread for the World* Hunger Advocacy Workshop
10 a.m.-1 p.m.
at **Pittsburgh Theological Seminary**

Join Rev. Eugene Cho, President of Bread for the World, to learn more about the Farm Bill, a comprehensive piece of legislation renewed every five years that is an essential tool in the effort to end hunger. Discover connections to local anti-hunger ministries, practice your advocacy storytelling skills, and explore best practices for preaching about food justice.

Saturday, October 15 *Splendor in the Glass* 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Tour churches across the city of Pittsburgh as we celebrate our city's beautiful stained glass. Co-sponsored by Christian Associates, Allegheny Historic Preservation Society, and DOORS OPEN Pittsburgh.



Wednesday, October 19 *We Have to Talk: Repairing the World* 9:30 a.m. - noon at the **Jewish Community Center of Greater Pittsburgh**

Join interfaith spiritual leaders for a special screening of this documentary film about the response to the 10.27.18 synagogue shootings in Pittsburgh, and join in discussion about all our community has learned in the four years since.

Registration for all these events opens in early fall; see the September *Call* for details.

Foster Parents Needed: An Appeal to Churches

by Rev. Chad Bogdewic

*“Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this:
to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and
to keep oneself unstained by the world.”*

James 1:27

All throughout Scripture, from the Hebrew Bible to the New Testament, there is a claim that we are made in God's image.

As the author of Genesis 1:26-27 writes, “Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness... So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”

There have been many arguments and disagreements over the years about what it means to be created in the image of God, but perhaps we are over thinking it. What if instead of asking “How?”, we asked, “What now?”

When we focus on the “how” it inevitably leads to a “who,” as in, “who is created in God's image and who is not?” But when we focus on the “what now,” the who is already assumed to be all. This inevitably leads us to Matthew



25:31-46, the judgment of the nations, the sheep and the goats, the idea that helping or hurting the least is also helping or hurting God.

I walk in two worlds, as it were. One in which I am an ordained and seminary trained pastor. The other is as a foster family recruiter. There is a lot of need outside of our doors to help the proverbial and literal orphans in our midst.

According to PA Partnerships, in Allegheny County alone, there are over 15,000 children and youth in the foster care system.

These children and youth in foster care need caring people like those who worship with you to help them succeed.

Merakey's foster care program welcomes all people without regard to their gender identity or where they fall in the sexual spectrum.

If your congregation would like to learn more about the needs of foster kids, how they can help, or if you would like to invite us to share with your congregation; please reach out at Chad.Bogdewic@merakey.org.



Spring 2022 In Pictures!



Dr. Sheldon Sorge of Pittsburgh Presbytery and Archbishop William Skurla of the Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh following the prayer service for peace in Ukraine held at St. Paul Cathedral on March 6



Participants share experiences at a Farm Bill Consultation organized by the SWPA Bread for the World Team on May 10.



Three priests, two pastors, a rabbi, and a Latter Day Saint clamber into a minivan ... it was not a joke, but a holy (if squashed) reality during our interfaith pilgrimage to Washington DC in April. *Left to right:* Fr. David Poecking, Rabbi Daniel Fellman, Fr. Alek Shrenk, Fr. DJ Egan, Rev. Liddy Barlow, Vicky Smallwood, Canon Natalie Hall.



A panel of Christian leaders offered an interactive Bible study at the Pittsburgh Pastoral Care Conference on May 6. *Left to right:* Dr. Asa Lee of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Elder Ralph Lowe of Pittsburgh Presbytery, Bishop David Zubik of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh, and Bishop Ketlen Solak of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh



Rev. Lamont Wells offers the sermon at "The Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.," an ecumenical service of Holy Communion on April 3.

GUIDING THE FAITHFUL IN COMPLEX TIMES

Wise Women's Work

A Community and Conversation Series

October, November, 2022, January-April, 2023

www.pts.edu/Wise-Women-2223

The Art of Transitional Ministry Part 2

Oct. 6, 13, 20, 27, Nov. 3, 10 and 17, 2022

www.pts.edu/TM2-2223

The Art of Transitional Ministry Part 1 *Save the Dates!*

Feb. 16, 23, March 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30, 2023

www.pts.edu/TM1-2223

World Mission Initiative Conference and W. Don McClure Lecture

Missional Leadership in a Time of Disruption

Featuring the Rev. Eugene E. Cho, Church Planter, President / CEO Bread for the World

Oct. 7-8, 2022

Cho will deliver the W. Don McClure Lecture Fri., Oct. 7.

www.pts.edu/wmi-conference



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The King's Brass performing at Northgate Church July 17



Tim Zimmerman and the King's Brass
returns to **Northgate Church**,
(238 West View Avenue, Ross)
for performances
at 9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. services
on **Sunday, July 17.**

The touring group of professional musicians -- sax, trombone, tuba, percussion and keyboard --brings contemporary flair to hymns and classics. Secular and sacred music critics alike call the performance "truly, an unforgettable experience."

No fee or registration is required.

Visit kingsbrass.org or northgatechurch.com
for additional information.

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Faith+Blue combines existing initiatives

Various projects seeking to build trusting relationship and honest dialogue between spiritual leaders and the police officers serving their neighborhoods have combined under a single banner: Faith+Blue Pittsburgh.



FAITH & BLUE

Christian Associates' Rebuilding & Restoring dialogues will now be part of Faith+Blue Pittsburgh, as will the OneCOP project that launched its Pittsburgh work in March.

"This conversation is too important for us to work in silos!" said Rev. Liddy Barlow. "We need a united, multifaceted effort. The leaders of all these initiatives are committed to working together."

Spiritual leaders will find many ways to become engaged in this important work, including dialogues, breakfasts, learning sessions, and one-to-one pairings.

To ensure you stay up to date with the latest offerings of Faith+Blue Pittsburgh, email Officer Dom Maggio at dominic.maggio@pittsburghpa.gov.

Overdose Awareness Memorial Service



Friday, August 26 at Noon
Trinity Cathedral, downtown Pittsburgh

Join us for a time of prayer and remembrance as we commemorate those who have died from overdose in the past year.