

# Christian Associates of Southwest Pennsylvania

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## The Call . . .

On the Web: [www.casp.org](http://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 2022, Number 4

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

### World Mission Conference – Bread for the World 2022

The Pittsburgh Theological Seminary is excited to host the World Mission Initiative Conference in conjunction with their annual Don McClure lectures on the theme “Missional Leadership in a Time of Disruption” on Friday and Saturday, October 7-8, 2022.

The keynote speaker for this event will be the new president and CEO of *Bread for the World*, the Reverend Eugene Cho. It also features presentations and conversations with the Rev. Saleem hubril, the Rev. Dr. Asa Lee, and the Rev. Karen Rohrer.

The conference will be held in a hybrid format both online and in-person. The event is free of charge and



**breadfortheworld**  
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registration is required for attendance. Register online here: [www.pts.edu/wmi-conference](http://www.pts.edu/wmi-conference).

To become a sponsor for the event, please call 412-924-1364 or e-mail [wmi@pts.edu](mailto:wmi@pts.edu).

#### SAVE THE DATE!

“Sowing Food Justice – Why the Farm Bill Matters to Ending Hunger” workshop at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary originally scheduled for Saturday, October 8, 2022, has been rescheduled for Saturday April 22, 2023 from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.



### Welcome, Bishop Alex Cameron!

Christian Associates of Southwest Pennsylvania congratulates and welcomes newly consecrated Bishop Alex Whitcomb Cameron of the Anglican Diocese of Pittsburgh. Bishop Cameron was consecrated at Church of the Ascension on August 6, 2022.

“I’m excited about working with [Bishop] Cameron,” said Rev. Liddy Barlow, Executive Minister of Christian Associates of Southwest Pennsylvania. “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. He will be an excellent addition to our Council of Bishops and Executives.”

Bishop Cameron was initially elected by the College on April 30, 2022 after 30 years as an ordained Anglican priest and has been involved with the Isaiah Forty Foundation since 1996 and is currently the President of the foundation. He has also led churches in Montreal, Vermont, and Chicago, and has worked as a business leader and entrepreneur.

# REFLECTIONS ALONG THE WAY

Dear friends,

Years ago, I was given a “Life Verse”, one that I could recite and live by. It is Matthew 6:33 *“Seek Ye First the kingdom of God, and God’s righteousness, and all these things will be given unto you.”*

This direction has served me well in 30 years of ministry, and which has now brought me to this time and place as the Sabbatical Supply Acting Executive Minister of Christian Associates of Southwest Pennsylvania where I am awash in a Council of Bishops of every stripe and creed, Christian Justice and Peace organizations, and Interfaith Justice and Peace organizations that are all trying their best (in my mind) to “seek first the kingdom of God” where all God’s creation and creatures are respected, loved, and cared for.

These dear people are refreshment for my soul like a gift directly from God. I give thanks for all of them, and the varied important work that they do for justice and peace. For this work is not without price of time, resources, energy, and sometimes personal or professional push-back in these divisive times.

One of the things I have learned the past few months is that for Rev. Liddy and the Council of Bishops there is much to do, and not enough time for her, or them, to keep all the plates spinning, or all the balls in the air.

At present we, as a council, have been doing some strategic planning, and we ask your prayers for us as we continue the process. It is my hope that we can build on the direction we have charted, and open the gates wider to invite others to join us in the mission work God sets before us in Southwest Pennsylvania.

Reverend Liddy has been a friend of mine for a long time and is very well suited for the work of Executive Minister of Christian Associates. I hope she has found time to rest and refresh her soul and renew her excitement for the work God sets before her upon her return.

Thank you everyone for making me feel welcome in this honored position.

Respectfully,

*Linda*

Reverend Linda Miller-Pretz  
Sabbatical Supply  
Acting Executive Minister  
Christian Associates  
of Southwest Pennsylvania



## The Pittsburgh Peace Is Possible Coalition Works for Positive Change

by Alan Guenther

Our *Pittsburgh Peace Is Possible Coalition* first came together after police repeatedly tased Jim Rogers, a 54-year-old homeless Black man, in October after he took a bicycle for a joy ride and returned it. Rogers died the next day. The Quaker Working Group Against Racism sent a letter to the mayor, expressing our outrage over the incident, and leaders of the First United Methodist Church (FUMC) of Pittsburgh joined with the Quakers to stage a rally in December.

We came together again in April to conduct a public forum called "Saving Lives, Keeping the Peace," and we were joined by Christian Associates Executive Minister Liddy Barlow, who acted as moderator of the event. The chief of police, the head of the Police Citizen Police Review Board, and members of activist groups participated in the panel discussion, and some lasting friendships were born.

In May, after Black people were murdered by a white supremacist in Buffalo, N.Y., and teens were shot in

Pittsburgh, Tim Stevens of the Black Political Empowerment Project (B-PEP) asked if we would help stage a "No Place for Hate Rally." More than 150 people attended at the FUMC. Gospel singers helped stir our souls while speakers representing Muslim, Jewish, and Christian faiths shared their personal stories to help explain how violence, and the loss of loved ones, can painfully alter the lives of families and communities.

Most recently, when a candidate for governor paid the Gab Social media platform \$5,000 to help promote his campaign, we wrote an article which was published by the Post-Gazette, "Doug Mastriano posts with bigots on Gab Social. Voters should know." We don't endorse political candidates, but we stand against hate speech. Since we are not a non-profit organization (in fact, we don't have any money at all), our volunteer members are free to say what they want in a timely fashion.

This has enabled us to be direct and to say what we feel is necessary. For example,

we called for charges to be brought against the police officers who mistreated Jim Rogers, who died unnecessarily for such a minor offense. Five of those officers were ultimately fired. We support unbiased law enforcement, but we feel that too often, marginalized people have trouble being represented fairly in the judicial system. To that end, we are currently working on bail reform, to keep people from being returned to jail on minor technicalities. For example, did you know that a young man was recently put in the Allegheny County Jail simply because the courts had been sending his "notice to appear in court" to the wrong address? What would take you or me a few minutes to resolve has instead kept him in jail for many days, and we are working to get him out.

Our faith-based and activist groups work to amplify the voices of those who need help being heard. To find out more, write to [PittsburghPeaceIsPossible@gmail.com](mailto:PittsburghPeaceIsPossible@gmail.com), and we will let you know how you can get involved.



## Meet Skyler Obertz, Christian Associates' Interfaith Research Associate

Skyler Oberst is a young interfaith leader with over ten years' experience of working at the intersection of faith, technology and youth engagement, Skyler has launched interfaith tech companies and various NGO initiatives around the globe.

An internationally sought speaker, Skyler has served on the Nextgen Task Force for the Parliament for the World's Religions, presented at the Obama White House on youth engagement and interreligious affairs, and has also worked as a research associate at the Pluralism Project at Harvard University.

His approach to building community is based on the intersectionality of



technology, intergenerational encounter and authentic spirituality. Skyler leads partnership development efforts as a member of the executive committee of A Common Word Among the Youth (ACWAY) and currently hosts the award-winning "Looking Up", a popular web series that showcases intergenerational and interreligious encounters around the world.

Skyler is assisting CASP in its efforts to map out in partnership with the JCC-PGH and the Russell Berrie Foundation to map out the spiritual landscape of Northern New Jersey by conducting research, analysis and curating a catalogue of interviews with religious leaders and interfaith actors in the region.

## International Association of Women Ministers meet in Karslruhe, Germany in "Holy Solidarity"

The International Association of Women Ministers (IAWM) supports women in ministry all over the world. It is uncertain how many women ministers were in attendance at the International Assembly from August 26-28 in Karslruhe, Germany, nor how many women were there from the United States, or our local chapter, except for our own Reverend Liddy Barlow who is, at present, the Presider of the Local Western Pennsylvania Chapter.

Our local chapter meets once a month from September to May, plus we have a winter retreat in January, and picnic sometime during the summer.

If you are a woman in ministry and want to be supported by women ministers in the Western Pennsylvania area, please check the internet for the "International Association of Women Ministers" and it will take you to our website.

Rev. Liddy will have a follow-up article in the next issue of *The Call*, along with the dates and times of IAWM local chapter gatherings.



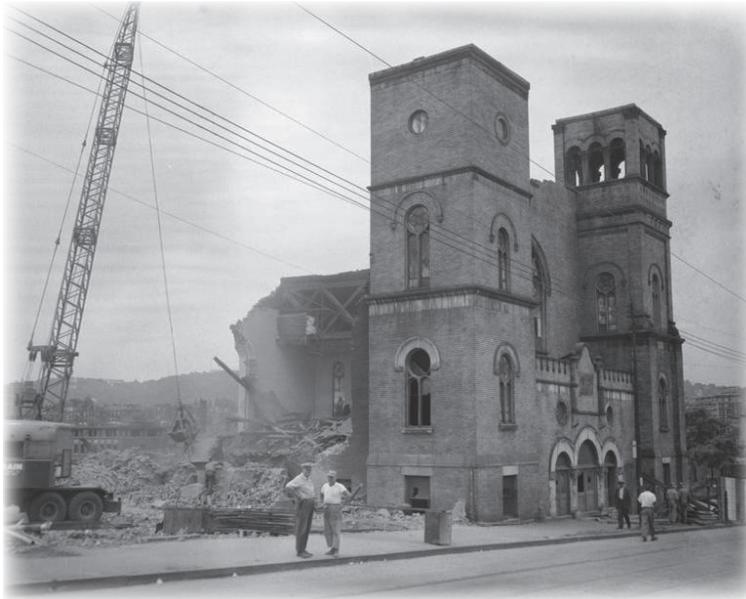
International Association of Women Ministers

## Bethel AME Church: Reparations and Celebration of Juneteenth 2022

*“How very good and pleasant it is when kindred come together in unity.”*

Some say Sunday morning is the most segregated hour, but that was not true at Bethel AME June 19, 2022. We came together to worship God, pray together, and hold each other in holy unity as we remembered, and bore witness to Jesus’ words, “That they all may be one” is possible.

We gathered at tables to share lunch and conversation before boarding a bus for an educational tour of the city property which lays dormant and in decay in the church neighborhood. We drove to the place where the original Bethel AME church was located. In its place was a high pile of dirt, and a new memorial park of cement and stone. The marker



made no mention of the beautiful historic Bethel AME church that once graced the hillside.

After the tour, we gathered in the sanctuary once again for a discussion on ecumenical engagement, reparations,

and social justice in America. Leon Haily monitored the discussion between Bishop Erroneous E. McCloud Jr., Third District, African Methodist Episcopal Church, and Bishop Kurt Kusserow, Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America.

The final question asked of the bishops was, “How do we find hope of social justice in America?” they answered, “work as it all depends on you; pray as it depends on God.” “Be the change you want to see.” “We are better together” “Remember to say please and thank you.” “Be a sower”.

Thank you, Rev. Dr. Dale B. Snyder, for gathering us as we felt one in Christ Jesus on this Juneteenth Sunday.

## National Faith & Blue Weekend 2022



# FAITH & BLUE

On July 11th, Archbishop William Skurla of the Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh attended a Zoom meeting with the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (or COPS Office) through the United States Department of Justice representing Christian Associates of Southwest Pennsylvania.

This was a gathering of prominent national religious leaders to “discuss strengthening this important effort to bridge gaps and improve relations between law enforcement and

communities of every kind”, according to COPS Acting Director, Robert Chapman.

Christian Associates is part of Faith+Blue Pittsburgh as part of its Rebuilding and Restoring dialogues.

To stay up to date with the latest information, email Officer Dom Maggio at [dominic.maggio@pittsburghpa.gov](mailto:dominic.maggio@pittsburghpa.gov).



## New CASP Appointment

The Rev. Maurice C. Frontz, III, the pastor of St. Stephen Lutheran Church for the past 10 years and longtime member of Christian Associates, has recently been appointed as the newest member of Christian Associates of Southwest Pennsylvania’s Theology & Education Committee.



We're certain that he'll be a valuable contributor to this vital committee. Thank you, Rev. Frontz!

## “Christ’s Love Moves the World to Reconciliation and Unity” at the World Council of Churches

The World Council of Churches is a worldwide Christian inter-church organization founded in 1948 for the cause of ecumenism. Their theme was “Christ’s Love Moves the World to Reconciliation and Unity”.

Rev. Liddy Barlow also attended this assembly, since it directly followed the International Association of Women Ministers Assembly in the same place.

At some time during the assembly, participants met in regional groups. The North American Region gathered in discussion and then ranked “what



### World Council of Churches

are the most urgent issues that we face in the region?”. The group highlighted six concerns.

- Racism, White Privilege, and White Supremacy
- Climate Justice
- Poverty and Wealth
- Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples
- Polarization
- Christian Nationalism

We are so glad that Liddy chose to attend these gatherings while she was on sabbatical, in order to bring home to us here in Southwest Pennsylvania world-wide views concerning the ministry and mission of Jesus Christ in the world today.

Thank you, Rev. Liddy!



### September Reflections

by Rev. Linda Miller-Pretz

I have always loved the season of fall. The weather turned a bit cooler, the trees began to change color, my wardrobe changed season and color too, and school started up again with new teachers, new things to learn, old friends to see again, and new school friends to meet.

What I remember most vividly was the poem we had to memorize in one of my classes. It was “*September*” by Helen Maria Hunt Jackson. This poem always seems to wrap me in a warm feeling of comfort, and a notion, that even though the world may be spinning all sorts of venom and uncertainty, God

is reminding me through the changing of the leaves, that in each season there is beauty and hope. God is and always will be.

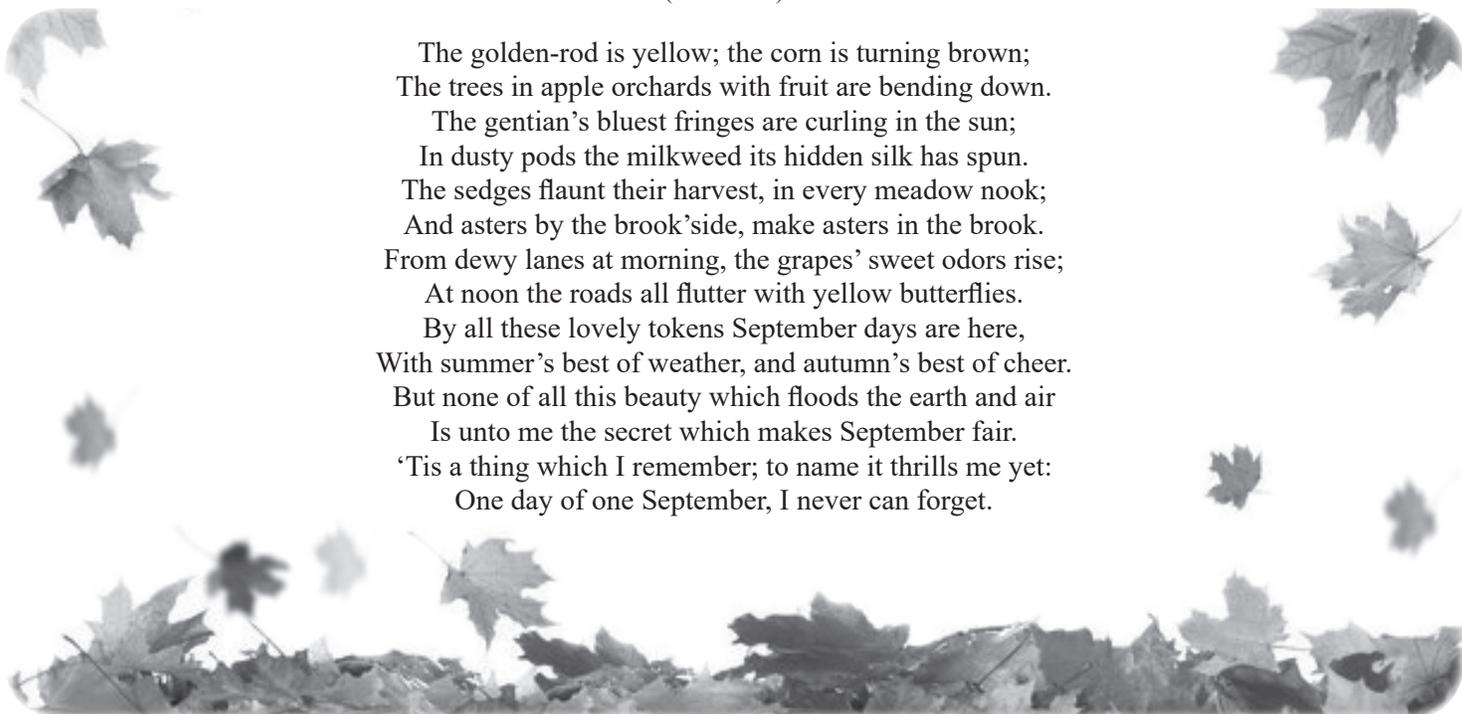
Thank you, Helen Maria Hunt Jackson for this beautiful poem.

### *September*

by

Helen Maria Hunt Jackson  
(1830-1885)

The golden-rod is yellow; the corn is turning brown;  
The trees in apple orchards with fruit are bending down.  
The gentian’s bluest fringes are curling in the sun;  
In dusty pods the milkweed its hidden silk has spun.  
The sedges flaunt their harvest, in every meadow nook;  
And asters by the brook’side, make asters in the brook.  
From dewy lanes at morning, the grapes’ sweet odors rise;  
At noon the roads all flutter with yellow butterflies.  
By all these lovely tokens September days are here,  
With summer’s best of weather, and autumn’s best of cheer.  
But none of all this beauty which floods the earth and air  
Is unto me the secret which makes September fair.  
‘Tis a thing which I remember; to name it thrills me yet:  
One day of one September, I never can forget.



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COST: \$10 per person / \$15 per couple



• 6:30pm: Mass in Epiphany Chapel

• Fr. Tony Gargotta, Homilist;  
Fr. Ken Kezmarsky, con-celebrant

• Following Mass, Dr. Susan Muto will offer meditations on a featured spiritual master

**September 21; October 19; November 16; December 7**

**\* RSVP Requested \***

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**The 43rd Annual Pittsburgh Family Systems  
Conference and Symposium**

**Understanding and Working with Triangles:  
A Challenge in Applying Family Systems Theory**

Online Conference via Zoom

**Keynote Speaker - Laurie Lassiter, PhD**

**Join The Western PA Family Center  
on October 14 and 15 2022.**

How do we manage self responsibly and intentionally in the context of emotional triangles? Dr. Lassiter will address the obstacles people experience in the effort to be more regulated by self and less by the automatic emotional pressures of the triangle.

*Other presenters will include WPFC faculty members, as well as early and more seasoned learners of family systems theory from around the country.*

Visit [www.wpfc.net](http://www.wpfc.net) for more info!



# GUIDING THE FAITHFUL IN COMPLEX TIMES

**Wise Women's Work**  
*A Community and Conversation Series*  
Online Oct. 27, Nov. 17, 2022,  
Jan. 19, Feb. 16, and March, 9, 2023

**The Art of Transitional Ministry  
Part 2**  
Oct. 6, 13, 20, 27, Nov. 3, 10 and  
17, 2022

**The Art of Transitional Ministry  
Part 1**  
Feb. 16, 23, March 2, 9, 16, 23, and  
30, 2023

*Missional Leadership in a Time of Disruption*  
**World Mission Initiative Conference and W. Don McClure Lecture**  
Featuring the Rev. Eugene E. Cho, Church Planter, President / CEO Bread for the World  
Online and In Person Oct. 7-8, 2022



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## Retreat to Laurelville

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**Events and Event Updates**

**“We Have to Talk: Repairing the World”**

Wednesday, October 19 from 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
at the Jewish Community Center in Squirrel Hill.

**“Sowing Food Justice – Why the Farm Bill Matters to Ending Hunger”**

at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, has been moved from Saturday, October 8, 2022 to Saturday, April 22, from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

**“Soul Shop: Ministering to Faith Communities Affected by Suicide”**

Thursday, October 27 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Christ United Methodist Church. Address: 44 Highland Road, Bethel Park, PA 15102. Cost: \$30. Register at: <https://wpasoulshop.attendease.com>

**Splendor in the Glass** – Postponed

**Violins of Hope** – October 5 - November 30, 2023.

Look for details in the coming months.

