

Christian Associates of Southwest Pennsylvania

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

The Call . . .

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Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

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to be one in Christ



June-July-August 2021 Number 3

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

Workshops Reach Across the Aisle to Build Understanding, Promote Peace

"Listening and stating common ground makes room for progress."

"Hard conversations are possible with some skills that can be practiced and shared."

"It is possible to have a civil conversation about politics!"

These were just some of the impressions that nearly 100 participants shared after *"Skills for Bridging the Divide,"* an April workshop that addressed the growing political division in the United States. With the right conversational tools, we can bring healing to our divided communities, without compromising our own deeply-held beliefs.



and ridicule for people who hold other political views. Register by June 17 at <http://bit.ly/depolarizingjune21>.

On **August 16** from **7:00-9:15 p.m.**, the *Families and Politics* workshop shows participants how to talk about politics with their loved ones in a way that brings them closer together — not farther apart. Register by August 12 at <http://bit.ly/familiesaugust16>. We will repeat this same workshop on **November 15**: just in time for Thanksgiving!

Building on this interest, Christian Associates and partner organizations across the community are co-sponsoring a series of additional workshops with Braver Angels (braverangels.org) this summer and fall. Each workshop will be free of charge and fully online via Zoom.

On **June 21** from **6:30-9:15 p.m.**, *Depolarizing Within* teaches participants how to be critical without demonizing, dismissing or stereotyping "the other side." Learn strategies for intervening constructively in social conversations with like-minded peers when these conversations veer into contempt

And, if you missed the original *Skills for Bridging the Divide* workshop—or if you'd like another chance to practice your skills—you can catch it again on **October 18**. Find a registration link in the September edition of *The Call*.

Allegheny County Jail Welcomes New Director of Chaplaincy Services



The **Rev. Charissa Howe** will begin serving as the new Director of Chaplaincy Services at Allegheny County Jail and Shuman Center on June 23. Chaplaincy is a program of the Foundation of HOPE, Christian Associates' partner in ministry.

Rev. Howe is no stranger to HOPE: she has volunteered in HOPE's pre-release and aftercare programs, teaching the "Beyond Trauma and Abuse" class inside the jail since 2015. "I found that to be such a powerful experience," she said. "There's such a need for trauma care."

For the past four years, Rev. Howe has pastored St. Andrew's (Sewickley) & Emsworth Presbyterian Churches. In 2020,

she served as moderator of Pittsburgh Presbytery.

"I'm so excited to welcome Rev. Howe to the team," said Jody Raeford, Executive Director of the Foundation of HOPE. "She brings with her a compassionate servant leader attitude that seems to naturally recognize the humanity of all people."

Rev. Howe said she hopes the Chaplaincy Department can be a place of healing. "When you bring healing to one or two people, or to a pod of people—even a small amount of healing—that begins to help heal everything: all of this broken, hurting world," she said.

Repairing the Breach: Spiritual Leaders to Discuss Reparations

Confessing our sin inspires us to repent and seek to amend our lives. It also leads to a next step: reparation. How do we make whole those we have harmed? And what about those who have suffered systemic harm, across decades or even centuries, such as the descendants of those who were enslaved?

Clergy and other spiritual leaders from across our region will gather to discuss these important questions at *We Have to Talk ... About Reparations*, a dialogue event on **Tuesday, August 24** from **1:00-2:30 p.m.**, via Zoom.

Our guests will help us think through reparations both locally and nationally, as a question of faith and as a practical reality.

The **Rev. Dr. Dale B. Snyder Sr.**, Senior Pastor of Bethel AME Church in Pittsburgh's Hill District, will speak on his congregation's quest for reparations after the demolition of their previous building during the redevelopment of the Lower Hill District in 1957.

Meanwhile, as seminaries, denominations, and religious orders consider the question of reparations, we'll welcome speakers from across the country to widen our perspectives. Find an up-to-date list of confirmed speakers at the event website.

As always, there will be opportunities for spiritual leaders to engage in small-group discussion: to meet one another, build relationship, and discover avenues for collaboration.

Registration is free of charge and available online at www.casp.org/reparations.



Bethel AME Church's building at Wylie and Elm Streets in the Lower Hill District, including a 1,900-seat sanctuary, was demolished in 1957. This Juneteenth, June 19 at noon, Bethel AME will gather at the parking lot on Centre Ave across from PPG Paints Arena to rededicate this historic site. All are welcome.

The "We Have to Talk" series of conversations among spiritual leaders began in the aftermath of the massacre at Tree of Life Synagogue, and includes virtual and in-person events for large and small groups.

Leaders from 9 world religions and 22 Christian denominations have participated in "We Have to Talk."

Sign up to receive emails about "We Have to Talk" events at casp.org/interfaithemail.



Classified Advertisements

Events

The Saint Vincent Archabbey Summer Retreat Program will host two online retreats this summer: *The Biblical Theology of King David* with Fr. Edward Mazich, O.S.B., and *The Parables of Jesus* with Fr. Wulfstan Clough, O.S.B.

Each will include five pre-recorded retreat conferences and one pre-recorded session each of morning, midday and evening prayer with the Benedictine monastic community.

Registration opens June 1. Registrants will have access to the retreats for one year. There will be a fee to subscribe to the retreats, which will be made available on Vimeo.

For additional details visit www.saintvincentretreats.org.

Resources Available

Free: 50 **Worship His Majesty** hymnals, published 1987 by Gaither Music Company. Excellent condition.

Contact Gary Brandenberger (724-591-5385), Sherwood Oaks Retirement Community, Cranberry Township.



**Reflections on the Way
will return in the September
edition of The Call.**

Help Wanted

ORGANIST NEEDED for Sunday services and funerals, plus choir direction if possible. Zion Lutheran Church, 557 Perry Highway, Harmony, PA, 16037. Send resumes to Bill Gasior, Council President, at the church address.

Calvary Episcopal Church in East Liberty is seeking a part-time *Director of Christian Formation* to begin in the summer. Duties include oversight of the program for birth through age 18; leadership of Christmas Pageant, Easter Egg Hunt, and related events; recruitment and support of teachers; and supervision of Sunday nursery workers. Familiarity with the Anglican and Episcopal tradition would help immensely. For a full description of the position and to express interest, please contact the Rector of Calvary Church at jjensen@calvarypg.org.

*"LISTENING IS WHERE LOVE BEGINS: LISTENING TO OURSELVES
AND THEN TO OUR NEIGHBORS."*

~ FRED ROGERS '62

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Overdose Awareness Day: *A Time to Remember*

Deaths by overdose accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic. Each person lost to overdose is a person precious to God and created in God's image. Together, we can remember them in prayer and support those left behind.

Our region will observe *International Overdose Awareness Day* on **Friday, August 27** with a **noon** memorial at **Trinity Cathedral**, 328 Sixth Avenue, Pittsburgh. The interfaith service includes prayers from faith leaders, testimonies from survivors, and blessings for first responders. Bells will toll for each overdose death in Allegheny County.

Along the sidewalk and throughout the cathedral grounds, passersby can discover a moving display of photos and memories remembering those who have died from overdose. Family members of overdose victims may submit photos to Karen Plavan to be included in the display: karenplavan@gmail.com.

Amen to Action Feeds Neighbors and Promotes Unity

One million meals for our neighbors: that's the goal of *Amen to Action*, an initiative that unites diverse Christians in meeting community need.

Partnering with Meals of Hope, *Amen to Action* will host meal-packing events at ten different sites on four different dates: **Saturdays, November 6, 13, and 20, and Friday, November 26.**

The hosts are varied in denominational affiliation and are located in many parts of Greater Pittsburgh, from Mt. Ararat Baptist Church to Crossroads United Methodist Church, from Orchard Hill Church to North Catholic High School.

Volunteers of all ages are welcome: *Amen to Action* is a great family volunteer activity.

Donations are also needed to support the project: just \$15 provides 50 meals. Both volunteer registration and online donations can be found at amentotoaction.org.