Interfaith Pilgrimage Will Explore Houses of Worship in Our Nation’s Capital

Southwest Pennsylvania spiritual leaders—both clergy and lay people—are invited to join a unique pilgrimage to Washington, DC this spring as we explore landmark houses of worship from six world religious traditions. The group will depart from Pittsburgh at 1 p.m. Monday, April 25 and will return at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, April 27.

The itinerary is still subject to change, but tentatively includes visits to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington National Cathedral, Metropolitan AME Church, Sixth & I Synagogue, Sri Siva Vishnu Temple, and the Cambodian Buddhist Society. Also included is a VIP tour of the Washington DC Temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which is typically closed to the public.

Along the way, the pilgrims will have opportunities for group dialogue, sharing each person’s unique perspective and growing in community and understanding together. We will build ties that will remain strong upon our return to Southwest Pennsylvania.

Participants will carpool in private vehicles and will be responsible for booking their own rooms from a reserved block and for sharing the cost of meals, fuel, parking, and gifts for our hosts. The total per person cost in a shared room is estimated to be $400.

If you are interested in participating, please reserve your space before December 31 by emailing Rev. Liddy Barlow, lbarlow@casp.org.

Stormwater Fee Will Affect Pittsburgh Congregations

Pittsburgh’s aging infrastructure and the impacts of climate change will require major upgrades to the city’s stormwater management in coming years. To pay for these projects, the Pittsburgh Water & Sewer Authority is implementing a stormwater fee for all property owners—including churches—in early 2022.

The fee could add up to a significant new expense for many congregations. PWSA has calculated the fee based on satellite imagery showing the square footage of impermeable surfaces (such as roofs and parking areas) on each lot.

The fee will be $5.96 per month for each 1650-square-foot unit in 2022, increasing to $7.95 per month in 2023. For congregations with a larger physical plant, the total cost will be well over $1,000 per year.

To reduce the fee, PWSA will introduce a system of credits for property owners who have taken steps to minimize storm run-off, such as the installation of rain gardens. These projects may reduce the fee by as much as 60 percent.

Other local municipalities have already introduced similar fees, including Plum, Coraopolis, Mount Lebanon, and Monroeville.

Courts have ruled that the fees are not taxes, and thus there is no exemption for churches or other non-profit organizations.

Final details will be available pending Public Utilities Commission approval of the program in December.

Visit www.pgh2ostormwater.com for more information about stormwater management in Pittsburgh and the stormwater fee.
When my family decorates for Christmas, the best box that comes out of storage is also the heaviest one: the Christmas books. Opening the lid each year is like reuniting with dear friends.

Picture books combine art and story to share big ideas in simple words, drawing us into the spirit of the season. This Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany, why not share a picture book with your loved ones—or with children and adults at your church? You might start with one of these favorites:

*Refuge* (by Anne Booth and Sam Usher, Little Brown, 2015) picks up the nativity story where many retellings stop: as the Holy Family flees to Egypt for safety. The parallels to contemporary immigration stories are clear; a portion of the proceeds from book sales supports the UN High Commission on Refugees.

*A Small Miracle* (by Peter Collington, Dragonfly Books, 1997) is a story told in pictures, without words. When a poor, elderly woman collapses in the snow, help comes from an unexpected source: the figures in a nativity set! I love the illustration of Mary tenderly holding the woman’s hand … and of the Magi pawning their frankincense to purchase her Christmas dinner.

*The Miracle of Saint Nicholas* (by Gloria Whelan, illustrated by Judith Brown, Bethlehem Books, 1997) takes place in a Russian village just after the fall of Communism, as the community prepares for its first Christmas in decades. Where will they find the candles, the bread and wine, the icon, the priest? It’s a surprising story about the tenacity of faith and community in times of persecution.

*The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey* (by Susan Wojciechowski, illustrated by P.J. Lynch, Candlewick Press, 1995) tells the story of gruff and grieving woodcarver who rediscovers hope and joy as he crafts a nativity set for a curious boy. If your Christmas is blue, this is a good place to start.

*The Year of the Perfect Christmas Tree* (by Gloria Houston, illustrated by Barbara Cooney, Dial, 1988). In the mountains of North Carolina at the end of the First World War, Ruthie’s family take their turn providing a Christmas tree for the Pine Grove church. As a girl, I loved the way Ruthie’s dreams come true; as a parent, I love the way her mother sacrificially makes them happen. (My husband can’t read this one aloud without crying, so our Christmas tradition, of course, is to insist that he do so.)

*Humphrey’s First Christmas* (by Carol Heyer, Ideals, 2007) has some of the funniest illustrations ever, perfectly depicting a silly camel with a very high opinion of himself. It’s a fun Epiphany read-aloud, as Humphrey’s attention slowly turns from his own petty complaints to the awe of serving a newborn king.

*The Story of Holly and Ivy* (by Rumer Godden 1957, illustrated by Barbara Cooney 1985, Viking). If I had to call one of these books my favorite, it would be this one: the story of a doll unpurchased on a toy shop shelf and an orphaned girl scheduled to spend Christmas alone. On the surface, this story is entirely secular—but the magical way Holly and Ivy find one another speaks to a hidden Power, working for good in all things.

As we welcome the Word made flesh, let’s celebrate his story with words and pictures. Merry Christmas, friends.

Your sister in Christ,

Liddy Barlow
Executive Minister
Christian Associates of Southwest PA
A Special Visit from Constantinople

On October 27, our region was honored to welcome His All Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. The Patriarch, considered primus inter pares (first among equals) among Orthodox Christian bishops worldwide, made a brief visit to Pittsburgh, where he was welcomed by Metropolitan Savas of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh, clergy and lay leaders of the Metropolis, and Rev. Liddy Barlow of Christian Associates (far right).

For All the Saints, Who From Their Labors Rest …

Christian Associates remembers the faithful staff members and loyal volunteers who have died in 2021. Knowing that this list is incomplete, we pay tribute to these individuals as we recognize the many faithful men and women who have pursued unity in our region.

Gene Fozard, who worked as a producer and camera operator for Christian Associates Television from 1984 through 2013, died January 30. He was instrumental in the production of Greater Pittsburgh Lutherans and its successor, Lutherans Alive!, editing over 900 episodes of these programs.

The Rev. Dennis Benson died June 8. Very early in his storied career—he went on to decades of radio ministry as the host of “Passages,” interviewing John Lennon and Dolly Parton, among 15,000 others—he served as director of youth ministry for the Council of Churches of the Pittsburgh Area, remaining in this position as the Council became Christian Associates in 1970. He later co-founded the Presbyterian Media Mission.

Earl Clayton Hartman, Jr., who died July 8, was a member of Christian Associates’ communications staff, managing the Christian Associates Television studio at Carlow College. He was a member of Hope Lutheran Church in Cranberry and was active in Southwestern PA Synod ministries.

The Very Rev. Ronald Larko, pastor of St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church in Uniontown, died October 31. Until his death, he served as proxy representative to Christian Associates’ Council of Bishops & Judicatory Executives from the Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh.

The Rev. Tom Federline, a priest of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Greensburg and pastor of St. Pius X Parish and Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish, both in Mt. Pleasant, died November 8. He served as the Diocese’s proxy representative to the Council of Bishops and Executives until 2016.

May each of these faithful servants rest in peace and rise in glory.
Your Generosity Brings Us Nearer to the Unity We Seek

You believe—you may even declare your belief aloud each Sunday!— in one holy Catholic and apostolic church. In mystic truth, the church is already one: our unity is a holy reality.

On the ground, however, the view is more murky. Our churches are divided by theology and by history, by race and class, by politics and preferences. Our quarrels prevent us from offering a united witness. Our conflicts block us from gathering around Christ’s table together.

Will you join us in seeking to manifest the church’s true unity right here in our messy, broken world? Will you support us as we bring diverse and faithful Christians together, into common labor for the Gospel? Will you join Christian Associates in mission as we seek to live out Jesus’ dream of unity among all his disciples? Contributions from donors like you make all our ministries possible:

- **Building relationships among Christian leaders**, as we welcome new bishops and executives to the region and help them connect with their peers, developing collaborations that benefit congregations and neighborhoods across Southwest PA.
- **Interfaith initiatives**, such as the Sofa Spirituality series of online dialogue opportunities: building bridges with our neighbors, exploring our differences, and celebrating our shared values. Join us on the sofa at sofaspirituality.org!
- **Partnership between the church and community organizations**, as we work in collaboration to promote positive police-community interactions, end hunger, pursue racial justice, and much more.
- **Communications**, including this newsletter you are holding, that share the news, events, and information that help churches connect and thrive.

With the help of donors like you, we are well on our way to securing a solid financial future for Christian Associates—but to ensure that our work can continue for many decades to come, we need your continued support. Please take a stand for unity and collaboration by giving generously to Christian Associates.

You may use the enclosed envelope to send your gift today. Checks may be made payable to Christian Associates and mailed to:

Christian Associates of Southwest Pennsylvania
PO Box 5241
Pittsburgh, PA 15206

You can also give online at www.casp.org/donate. Your gift may qualify as a charitable deduction for federal income tax purposes.

Thank you for taking this important step toward the unity we share in Christ and yearn to make manifest here in Southwest Pennsylvania.

Special Ways to Give

**Be part of the Circle of Unity.** Circle members give monthly, providing the sustaining support that Christian Associates needs most.

You won’t need to remember to mail in a check; your contribution will be made automatically, and can be paused at any time.

Join the Circle of Unity by visiting www.casp.org/circleofunity and signing up for a monthly online gift.

**Join the John 17 Society.** The Society includes our most generous donors, who give $250 or more each year, or $21 or more each month.

Members of the John 17 Society are invited to attend a special social event each spring, where we celebrate your commitment and offer sneak peeks at what’s next in our work together.

**Make a distribution from your IRA.** If you are 70.5 years of age or older by the end of the year and have a traditional IRA that requires a minimum distribution, you may direct all or part of that distribution (up to $100,000) to Christian Associates before the end of the calendar year. The donated distribution is not subject to federal income taxes.

**Remember Christian Associates in your will.** Ensure that our work can continue for many years to come by including Christian Associates of Southwest Pennsylvania when you plan your estate.

How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!

Psalm 133:1
Thank you to our 2021 supporters!

The generous support of individuals, congregations, corporations, and foundations makes our work possible. Many thanks to each of these donors for their commitment to Christian unity! We look forward to including your name in this space next year.

* Indicates a member of the Circle of Unity monthly giving program
† In memoriam

**Sustainers**

$100-249
- The Rev. David and Ms. Marsha Ackerman
- The Rev. Peg Bowman
- Pastor Cathy Bowser
- Ms. Jacqueline Campbell
- The Rev. Sylvia Carlson
- The Rev. Nancy Chalfant-Walker
- The Rev. Dr. James E. Davison
- Mr. Jon Delano
- The Very Rev. Andrew Deskevich
- First Presbyterian Church of Newcastle
- Ms. Normandie Fulsion
- The Rev. Kimberly Greway and Mr. Kenneth Hendrata
- Mr. William Hansmann
- The Rev. Erik and Mrs. Lisa Hoeke
- * Ms. Mary Ann Hvizdos
- Ms. Bonnie M. Kautz
- Ms. Angela Letizia and Ms. Sandy North
- The Very Rev. Ronald P. Larko†
- The Rev. Linda Miller-Pretz
- The Rev. Timothy Monroe
- Ms. Marianne Novy
- The Rev. Dr. Victor C. and Mrs. Janice Peischl
- The Rev. Philip S. Ramstad
- Rodef Shalom Congregation
- The Rev. Robert Russell
- The Rev. Joseph C Scheib, JCL
- The Rev. Jeffrey D Sterling
- The Rev. John M. Titus
- Ms. M. Lucille Underwood
- The Rev. Diane Wiley

**John 17 Society**

"that they may all be one"

$250 or more

Anonymous
- * The Rev. Liddy and Mr. Gregory Barlow
- The Rev. Joseph J. Borodach
- The Rev. and Mrs. David and Sharon Carver
- Ms. Lynne Chadwick
- The Rev. Dr. James and Mrs. Gwenn Gilchrist
- Mrs. Donna Hansen
- The Rev. Jean Henderson
- * Majors Raphael and Sandra Jackson
- Bishop Kurt and Ms. Pamela Kusserow
- The Rev. Nancy Mears
- Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth and Barbara Miller
- The Rev. Richard Noftzger, Jr.
- Mr. Ronald W. Pedersen, Jr.
- The Rev. Marion Silbert
- The Rev. Dr. Sheldon Sorge and The Rev. Tammy Wiens
- The Stevens Family Foundation

**Supporters**

$50-99

Anonymous (2)
- The Rev. Chad Bogdewic
- The Rev. Canon Dr. Catherine M. Brall
- Rev. Lawrence R. Camberg
- * Mr. and Mrs. Gene† and Myra Fozard
- The Rev. Donald V. Gaffney
- Mrs. Barbara Hicks
- Mr. and Mrs. Howard and Shirley McIlvried
- Ms. Bonnie McIlvreen
- Ms. Michele Mullun
- Ms. Susan Orr
- Ms. Agnes Peebles
- The Rev. Ryan N. Pusch
- The Rev. Regis J Ryan
- The Rev. Paul Schrading
- The Rev. Lola Turnbull

**Friends**

$1-49

Anonymous (3)
- Bishop George Bashore
- The Rev. Rosemary Baumgardner
- Ms. Norma Lee Corbin
- The Rev. Dr. Rebecca Cole-Turner & the Rev. Dr. Ronald Cole-Turner
- Ms. Eileen Colianni
- The Rev. James W Garvey
- The Rev. John B. Gizler, III
- Ms. Mary C. Harwick
- The Rev. Meredith Hutchison
- Brother Benedict Janecko, OSB
- Ms. Theresa M Janorski
- Ms. Barbara Jewell
- The Rev. David and Ms. Patty Mears
- The Rev. Floyd Palmer
- Mrs. Colleen Ray
- Ms. Patricia Sherman
- The Rev. George Steffey

*This list includes donations made between November 15, 2020 and November 15, 2021. We have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of this list and apologize in advance if any names were omitted, miscategorized, or misspelled. Please contact our office if you discover an error and we will publish a correction. We are also deeply grateful to our member judicatures. We will print the list of our 2021 judicatory sponsors in the February 2022 edition.*
Winter Programs
For workshop registration or prayer breakfast tickets, contact Mary Ann Hvizdos
mahvizdos@verizon.net or 412-807-1611

Two Free Virtual Workshops Zoom Platform, Saturdays 10:00am to Noon

JANUARY 8, 2022
“Teen Mental Health & Emotional Well-Being”
Ms. Erin Barr, LCSW &
Ms. Allyah Kimbrough, MSW
UpStreet Pittsburgh

FEBRUARY 12, 2022
“Naming Ambiguous Loss & Grief”
Rev. Joseph Hedden
Emmanuel Reformed United Church of Christ
Rev. Taleeta Canady      Rev. Dr. William R. Glaze
Rochman Street Baptist Church Bethany Baptist Church

Annual Prayer Breakfast Returns
Saturday, March 5, 2022, 9:00am to 11:30 am
Church of the Redeemer, Squirrel Hill
“The Spirit of the Lord is Upon Me: Being Healed in a Suffering World.”
Worship & praise, full hot breakfast, door prizes, child-friendly
Tickets: Adults $10, Children $5
Attendance limited to 80 to allow for Covid protocols

Refresh, reconnect, renew at Laurelville, a Christian retreat center near Pittsburgh, PA

A SANCTUARY IN THE WOODS

Perfect for church groups, including women’s, men’s, and youth retreats.
Experience our peaceful setting, comfortable facilities, extensive recreation options, delicious meals, and signature Christ-like hospitality.

laurelville.org
info@laurelville.org
724.423.2056

Foundation of HOPE Annual Appeal
Providing excellence in Diversion, Chaplaincy, and Faith-based Pre & Post-Release Care for incarcerated and released individuals.

Make a secure tax-deductible donation today

New Address
540 Suismon St.
Pittsburgh, PA 15212
(412)321-3343
www.foundationofhope.org
Clergy Coaching and Spiritually-Integrated Counseling for Pastors, Men, Women, Children, Couples & Families

In-person and via Video | Call for appointment

412.741.7430
samaritancounseling.net

Guiding The Faithful In Complex Times

Register Now - All Classes and Events Take Place Online

Wise Women 2.0
Community and Conversation Series
Jan. 20, 2022
Cole Arthur Riley / Breathing
Feb. 17, 2022
Jacqui Lewis / Love
March 17, 2022
Sophonia Scott / True Self
April 28, 2022
Emily Welty / Place

The Art of Transitional Ministry Part I
Feb. 24, March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, April 7, 2022
Erin Jones, Jan Nolting Carter, Paul Rhebergen, and Robin Curras

Thinking about the Future of Your Church: Scenario Planning Post-Pandemic
March 6-April 9, 2022 (asynchronous)
Jim Downey

Entering the Psalms
Spiritual Formation Elective
March 10, 17, 24, 31, 2022
Rabbi Rachel Barenblat

One Week Intensive or 2-Day Courses in:
- Biblical Hebrew Narrative
- Spiritual Direction
- Africa: The Ancient-Future of Christianity
- Reformed Theology
- And More...

Join Us On Campus
To register, visit www.tsm.edu/interterm or contact 724-266-3838

www.pts.edu/CE  412-924-1345  ConEd@pts.edu
Worship Events Will Honor Martin Luther King, Jr.

The legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. continues this winter as communities gather in prayer to remember his witness to racial justice and nonviolent activism, and to recommit ourselves to seeking justice in our day.

The Southwest Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will host with an ecumenical service of Holy Communion on Sunday, January 16 at 4 p.m. at Berkeley Hills Lutheran Church, 517 Sangree Road, Pittsburgh 15237. Christian Associates is among many community co-sponsors of this event.

On Monday, January 17, in lieu of their traditional in-person worship service, the Wilkinsburg Sanctuary Project for Peace has organized an Inter-Faith Prayer Motorcade, departing from the Christian Church of Wilkinsburg, 748 Wallace Ave., at 1 p.m. Participants will drive together throughout Wilkinsburg borough, stopping to pray for peace, love, justice, and unity. For more information in pastorjanethb@gmail.com.

On Monday, January 17 at 7 p.m., the Baptist Ministers’ Conference of Pittsburgh and Vicinity will sponsor the 2022 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Virtual Observance, which will be aired on the Conference’s Facebook page, YouTube channel and website.

The preacher will be the Rev. Dr. Asa Lee, president of the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Rev. Liddy Barlow will be among many other community leaders bringing greetings and leading prayers during the service.

Let us gather side by side, virtually or physically, “until justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream.”