

## **Penn West Conference Legacy Team Report**

The Legacy Team is a group of people from our Conference who have gathered together to support local congregations in the Conference who are considering closure or who are in the process of closing. In recent years, our team has given assistance to churches like First, Pitcairn, which closed in 2017. This year, our team helped with St. Thomas, Shelocta, that celebrated its closure service on November 25 and which we marked on the books as closed on April 16. The closing service was quite memorable, with Dr. John Kautz preaching in the very place where his father preached years ago! We have also been assisting the following churches that are currently in the process of closing:

Birmingham, Pittsburgh  
Calvary, Turtle Creek  
Redeemer's, Ellerslie MD  
First, Apollo

Please pray for them and for all churches that are in this tender time in their lives.

Some other items that the Legacy Team attends to include the following:

1. Leading a visioning/discerning process with a congregation trying to decide its future.
2. Consulting with a church that has serious building and financial concerns.
3. Working closely with a church offering pastoral care, emotional support, and guidance in the process toward church closure.
4. Participation in the church closing service.
5. Attending webinars from the national setting.

I believe that it is truly important to celebrate the gifts that our closing local churches have left to their communities, to the wider church, and to the world. Our hearts ache for congregations that have reached this point in their lives. We are mindful of the fact that none of the churches founded by the Apostle Paul are still in existence today. But even though there are times when certain church communities die, the church lives on. And in this Easter season of new life and resurrection, we seek to be ever attentive to the new life that God gives in our midst. So thanks to all members of our Legacy Team, which currently include the Rev. Linda Miler-Pretz, Joel Pretz, the Rev. Dr. Robert McKie, the Rev. Lois Morrison, George Kepple, Art Weldy, the Rev. Scott Fuller, Earl Mostoller, Tom Croner, Diane Wiley, and Jim Neatrou. If you'd like to join this important team in our Conference, please see me. God's blessings be with you all!

Respectfully submitted,  
David Ackerman