

## Penn West Academy Report 2019

*Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. . . . For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross. And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, Jesus has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him— Colossians Chapter 1, selected verses.*

Do you want to get closer to God? Of course you do. That's why you are at Conference Meeting and reading a rather rote report by someone with the title "Dean." I mean, would you really have given up your weekend to come to a meeting, sit down and read a report by someone you may or may not know well? You're not doing this for the kicks. Of course, you want to get closer to God!

Maybe you feel stuck in your life. Maybe the church is sometimes a little difficult for you to work in and work with. Maybe you have a dream for ways things could be better.

With everything we do at the Penn West Academy, we aim to get closer to this Jesus, who is the 'image of God.' We think differently about our world. It's not just about economics or politics or psychology but about a real, living connection to God our Creator through Jesus. Our classes all have this goal in mind: to get closer to God through preaching, service, prayer, our Christian history. Do you want to know where to turn in your Bible to find comfort in times of pain? Our faculty can help you do that. Do you want to know more about how Jesus can be discovered in a world that often seems out of sorts, violent, and mean? Our faculty have spent much time pondering these very questions and have stories that will inspire you. The Penn West Academy curriculum is simply designed—four weekends per year for four years. We also just happen to have best students anywhere, who will ask questions side by side with you.

Our faculty are prepared to show you the most effective ways to preach the gospel or to find inspiration in the Old Testament stories. Bridging the ancient with today, Penn West Faculty are people of faith who will help you on your faithful path to God.

On behalf of the faculty: George Kepple (Church History); Stephen Fair (Preaching and Worship); Meredith Hutchison (United Church of Christ Covenant and Polity); David Longstreet (Old Testament); George Steffey (New Testament).

Joseph Hedden, Dean & Instructor in Theology