

CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATES OF SOUTHWEST PENNSYLVANIA  
*A Unifying Voice in the name of Jesus Christ  
for the Mission of the Gospel and the Wholeness of Communities*

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Spring 2019

Dear friends in the Penn West Conference,

Grace and peace to you! Christian Associates of Southwest Pennsylvania is thrilled to be your partner in seeking to make visible the reality that there is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. Guided by our core values of collegiality, collaboration, communication, and connectedness, we bring together 28 Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant church bodies to be a unifying voice for the mission of the Gospel and the wholeness of our communities.

As in years past, the Penn West Conference has continued to support Christian Associates with faithful enthusiasm. We are grateful for your financial contribution to our ministries and for Rev. David Ackerman's personal engagement in our Council of Bishops & Judicatory Executives. We also celebrate the many clergy and lay people of the Conference who have participated in our programs and events, or made personal gifts to sustain our ministries. Thank you for being such terrific partners!

With your help, we have been working with energy and creativity to make the unity of Christ's church more visible in the ten counties of Southwest Pennsylvania. Here are just a few of the projects that your support is making possible:

- The **#300CupsofCoffee** initiative invites Christian leaders to enjoy a hot drink with a new friend – on us! Identify a colleague whom you don't yet know, invite that person out for a conversation, submit a selfie from the coffee shop, and Christian Associates will reimburse you. We invite every minister in the Presbytery to take advantage of this opportunity to make a new friend and deepen your connections in your neighborhood and beyond. Visit [www.casp.org/300cups](http://www.casp.org/300cups) for all the details.
- When evil came to Tree of Life Synagogue, Christian Associates was a first responder, speaking peace and healing in the face of terror and helping

coordinate an interfaith response to support our Jewish family. These efforts have continued through the **We Have To Talk** series of interfaith clergy gatherings. So far, we have convened spiritual leaders from 24 Christian denominations and 8 world religions, and plan a variety of projects to foster understanding and peace among our traditions. We hope you will participate; visit [www.casp.org/interfaithemail](http://www.casp.org/interfaithemail) to find out about our next gathering.

- Our Council of Bishops & Judicatory Executives speaks with one voice on issues of public concern – and then Christian Associates brings those statements to life by working with community partners on innovating projects and programs. To name a few examples, in recent months our **Allies in Faith** project helped clergy and lay leaders find ways to reach out to immigrants in their neighborhoods, and our **Stories from the Sanctuary** program offered pastoral care strategies for pastors responding to domestic and sexual violence.

In 2020, Christian Associates will celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary! We plan a grand celebration, including events, publications, and opportunities for prayer and thanksgiving. It's our hope that this anniversary will help propel us into our next half-century with fresh momentum, so that Southwest Pennsylvania can continue to be a national leader in imagining the future of ecumenism.

Although the gifts we receive from judicatories such as the Presbytery are vitally important to our work, we also look to individual, congregational, corporate, and foundation donors to support our mission. We are especially grateful to the members of the John 17 Society, who support our work with gifts of \$250 or more each year. This year, we also introduced the Circle of Unity, our monthly giving society, for those who choose to sustain our ministries through a continuing online donation. For more information about these giving options, or to make your own gift of any size to Christian Associates, visit [www.casp.org/donate](http://www.casp.org/donate).

Encountering our Christian brothers and sisters deepens our own understanding and practice of faith, and helps us to recognize that despite all of our differences, we truly are one body. May the spirit of unity, friendship, and reconciliation be with you all. Thank you again for your support of Christian Associates.

Your sister in Christ,

The Rev. Liddy Barlow  
Executive Minister