

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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Dear good people of the Penn West Conference,

“That they may all be one.” Sound familiar?

In 1970, the Penn West Conference’s bedrock commitment to Christian unity led it to become a founding member of Christian Associates of Southwest Pennsylvania. Through Christian Associates, we are partners in ministry with twenty-seven other regional church bodies: diverse Christian churches that are Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox; Black and white; progressive and conservative; rural and urban. Guided by our core values of collegiality, collaboration, communication, and connectedness, our member churches come together as a unifying voice for the mission of the Gospel and the wholeness of our communities.

I am so grateful for the Conference’s faithfulness to this mission. Your financial partnership helps to sustain our ministries. Rev. Ackerman provides a steady voice of committed experience within our Council of Bishops & Judicatory Executives. I am also grateful for 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.

With your help, Christian Associates is working to heal divisions and spark collaboration among the diverse churches of Southwest Pennsylvania. Here are just a few of the projects that your support is making possible:

- We are building new bridges with our brothers and sisters from evangelical and independent churches, discovering common ground and opportunities for partnership. In doing so, we are uncovering our own founding values as an organization: working for unity where that work is a challenge, not only where it comes easily.
- We continue to respond rapidly when our neighbors need support. After the devastating earthquakes in Turkiye and Syria, Christian Associates took the lead in planning an interfaith community vigil, lifting prayers from nine religious traditions.

- Our ministries continued at full speed in summer 2022 even as I enjoyed a three-month sabbatical after eight years of service to Christian Associates. Under the interim leadership of Penn West's own Rev. Linda Miller-Pretz, Christian Associates came alongside Bethel AME in its quest for reparations and engaged in several initiatives to end violence in the community.
- Sofa Spirituality, an online interfaith dialogue initiative, continues to expand and flourish. Visit sofaspirituality.org to watch interviews with diverse spiritual leaders and sign up for small-group conversations to explore our fascinating differences and discover our shared values: we're hosting dialogues throughout the month of June. In addition to these public dialogues, we also offer customized Sofa Spirituality experiences for congregations, ministeriums, or community groups; please reach out to bring this tool to your setting.
- Christian Associates partners with an array of civic, community, and interfaith groups to offer educational and relationship-building programming: from the local chapter of Bread for the World to the annual Pittsburgh Pastoral Care Conference to Braver Angels' work to reduce political polarization. Be sure to subscribe to our e-newsletter, Unity n'At, for all the latest updates and events: casp.org/signup. You can also follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/christianassociatesswpa.

I am especially excited for the work that lies ahead. In May, our Council of Bishops & Judicatory Executives approved a new five-year strategic plan for Christian Associates, recommitting us to our core values and expanding our work in response to recent trends. There is so much good ministry before us!

All these projects—and many, many more!—are made possible by the generous support of our member church bodies and our community supporters. Although the gifts we receive from judicatories such as the Synod 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. For more information about giving opportunities, visit www.casp.org/donate.

Across all our differences, the Spirit calls us to experience and to celebrate our true unity in Jesus Christ. Thank you so much, Penn West Conference, for your faithful ministry and your commitment to this ecumenical journey.

Your sister in Christ,

The Rev. Liddy Barlow
Executive Minister