

Penn West Academy for Ministry Annual Catalogue 2023-2024



WELCOME

The vision of the Penn West Academy is: To know God and to be known by God in Christ Jesus.

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Penn West Academy for Ministry Catalogue! The Academy is a spiritual and educational program of the Penn West Conference of the United Church of Christ that aims to prepare women and men for service in local churches. Run under the authority of the Conference Committee on Ministry, the Academy provides courses in Biblical Studies, Theology, Worship and Preaching, Church History and United Church of Christ Covenant and Polity. This catalogue outlines educational opportunities for clergy and lay persons in the Academic Year of 2023-2024. If God is calling you to a deeper walk of faith or “to make this faith [your] own in reality of worship, in honesty of thought and expression, and in purity of heart before God,”[from the UCC Constitution] you might discern that the Penn West Academy is for you.

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Joseph Hedden, Dean
Hills.church.3618@gmail.com
412-956-5252

ASSOCIATION COMMITTEES ON MINISTRY & TUITION

The Application and Credentialing of all students takes place through the Association Committees on Ministry. Please submit the application found on the last page of this Catalogue to the chairperson of your Association Committee on Ministry. Completion of the full four year course of the Academy will result in a Certificate of Completion being issued; *the Academy does not guarantee nor grant credentialing*. Questions of Licensing, Commissioning and credentialing in the United Church of Christ are the responsibility of the Associations. Please be in direct and frequent covenantal contact with the Committee on Ministry of your Association regarding your discernment status.

The tuition for a student of the Penn West Academy is \$400 per year. Payments should be made to the Penn West Conference by December 31st of each academic year. Payment should be addressed as follows:

Penn West Conference
 Attn: Diane Fox
 Suite PWC
 312 South Maple Avenue,
 Greensburg, PA 15601.

Students will be expected to purchase books or instructional materials. Students may wish to seek funding assistance from their home church or association. A student exploring the Academy may attend one weekend session free of charge. After this, tuition payments are expected.

AUDIT OPTION

The Penn West Academy now offers an audit option for those who would like to get some Continuing Education or have interest in a particular topic but do not wish to take the complete course offerings. Auditors will have access to four class lessons in a specific subject area (ie. Worship and Preaching or Old Testament) during the year for **\$60**. Auditors will not be expected to turn in assignments but are welcome to participate in classroom discussion, etc. Course descriptions and topics covered can be found at the Conference Website: www.pennwest.org. So if you would like to hear what is new in the field of New Testament Studies or have trouble remembering the difference between John Calvin and John of Patmos, call the Dean, Joseph Hedden (412)-956-5252 now!

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVES

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--------------|
| <u>Clarion:</u> | Rev. Barry Fillman 1970 Big Run/Prescottville Rd. Reynoldsville, PA 15851 | 814-427-2468 |
| <u>Juniata:</u> | Mr. James Neatrou 8810 King Saint Clair Road Osterburg, PA 16667 jabez1924@gmail.com | 814-937-0201 |
| <u>Lake Erie:</u> | Rev. Dr. Ericjon Thomas 245 Todd Avenue Hermitage, PA 16148 ericjonthomas@gmail.com | 202-361-1218 |
| <u>Pittsburgh:</u> | Rev. David Mears 3712 Saxonburg Road Pittsburgh, PA 15238 dave.mears33@gmail.com | 724-757-1922 |
| <u>Somerset:</u> | Rev. Jay E Shaffer 2385 Stutzmantown Rd Somerset, PA 15501 jayeshaffer@gmail.com. | 814-483-0398 |
| <u>Westmoreland:</u> | Rev. Shirley Musick 717 Latrobe-Crabtree Rd. Latrobe PA 15650 Bjsmusick@verizon.net | 724-552-8684 |

FACULTY

The Rev. Julia DiFiore

Instructor in Old Testament

228 Willow Circle

Cranberry Township, PA 16066

330-730-1339

JLDIFIORE7@gmail.com

Pastor Julia serves as pastor of Bradford Woods Community Church in Bradford Woods. She earned her B.A. in Biblical & Theological studies at Malone University as well as a graduate from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary with a Masters in Divinity and a Certificate in Church Planting and Revitalization. She also serves on the Penn-West Conference Justice and Witness team, the Conference Associate for Youth Ministry Board, the Pittsburgh Association Committee on Ministry, as well as the Pittsburgh Association Board.

The Rev. Joseph Hedden*Instructor in Theology and Dean of the Academy**4915 Sardis Road**412-956-5252**Murrysville, PA 15668**pastorjoseph@hills-church.org*

Rev. Hedden is pastor of Emmanuel Reformed (Hill's) United Church of Christ in Export and a graduate of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. He also has obtained a certificate in Spiritual Direction and Spiritual Leadership from the Pneuma Institute.

The Rev. Meredith Hutchison*Instructor in United Church of Christ Covenant and Polity**169 Sheffield Drive**724-689-6726**Delmont, PA 15626**mercomp@aol.com*

Rev. Hutchison is a retired pastor, having last served at Denmark Manor United Church of Christ in Export. She is a graduate of Andover Newton Theological School with a "Fellow in Pastoral Leadership Development" certificate from Princeton Theological Seminary, a Certificate in Spiritual Direction from The West Virginia Institute for Spirituality and is an Associate Spiritual Director as well as an Associate Ministry Director with WVIS.

The Rev. Dr. George Steffey*Instructor in New Testament**275 Norman Drive**724-759-4195**Cranberry, PA 16066**gssteffey@aol.com*

Rev. Dr. Steffey is a retired local church pastor. He is a graduate of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and teaches New Testament.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Old Testament: In this course, students will survey the Old Testament as they develop critical skills for Biblical interpretation. Strong consideration will be given to historical context as students reflect on how the authors' messages relate to our present time.

New Testament: In this course, students will survey the New Testament as they develop critical skills for Biblical interpretation. Strong consideration will be given to historical context as students reflect on how the authors' messages relate to our present time.

Church History: This course will attempt to answer the question 'Who is Jesus Christ?' from an historical perspective. Students will sail through 2000 years of Christian thought from the close of the Canon until today.

Theology: Students in the Theology course will be introduced to approaches of theological study of the past and present. As they engage in these studies, students will learn to think and reflect theologically and spiritually. ****All** fourth year students are

required to turn in **before** the final class a theology paper that may be included in the portfolio of Members in Discernment, upon the approval of their association advisor.

United Church of Christ Covenant and Polity: Students in this course will discover a deeper understanding and appreciate of the concept of covenant and how it relates to polity and structure in the UCC. Some Church and Ministry Committees may require this course for non-UCC ministers serving in UCC settings. *All fourth year students are required to turn in **before** the final class a UCC Polity paper that may be included in the portfolio of Members in Discernment, upon the approval of their association advisor.

Worship and Preaching: This course provides an understanding of the theology of Christian preaching and worship. We will study the liturgical, exegetical, homiletical, theological, and pastoral dynamics of worship and preaching.

RETURNING STUDENTS

Nicole Tascarella: (Trinity, Scottdale) 1270 Kittaning Pike, Chicora, PA 16025.
724-504-7468. ntascarella@gmail.com Auditing Year 4.

Harvey Noel: (Christ Church, United Church of Christ, Latrobe, PA 15650).
724-863-4193. noelharv52846@gmail.com Entering Year 2

Course Schedule 2023-2024 Dates:

September 8-9, 2023

October 13-14, 2023

Special Block: Friday, Nov. 10, 2023

March 8-9, 2024

May 10-11, 2024

Our Hosts:

**First Reformed United Church of Christ
312 South Maple Avenue
Greensburg PA 15601**

The 2023-2024 Special Blocks will be led by Ann Depner, MSW LCSW, a licensed clinical social worker, with a Master's degree from the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work. She will be presenting on the theory and leadership potential of Bowen

Family Systems Theory. Family systems theory defines a family, a congregation, a corporation, a Cub Pack as a complex system in which members interact to influence each other's behavior. The view is of the whole system, rather than focus on just one part of the system. For example, any change in one individual within a family or congregation is likely to influence the entire system and may even lead to change in other members. Changing your leadership style has the potential to impact the entire body.

The regular schedule for these sessions is as follows:

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Friday:</i> | <i>6:00-7:20 PM</i> | <i>Special Block</i> |
| | <i>7:30-8:50 PM</i> | <i>Church History</i> |
| <i>Saturday</i> | <i>8:00-9:20 AM</i> | <i>Worship and Preaching</i> |
| | <i>9:30-10:50 AM</i> | <i>Theology</i> |
| | <i>11:00AM-12:20 PM</i> | <i>Hebrew Bible</i> |
| | <i>12:20-1:30PM</i> | <i>Lunch</i> |
| | <i>1:30-2:50PM</i> | <i>New Testament</i> |
| | <i>3:00-4:20PM</i> | <i>Covenant & Polity</i> |

All regular sessions are held at First Reformed United Church of Christ, 312 S. Maple Street, Greensburg, PA, 15601. The Church is located at the corner of Third and South Maple Avenues. A *Zoom option is available if traveling is prohibitive for either students or faculty.*

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS AND CODE OF CONDUCT

Since there are many different types of students who enroll in the Penn West Academy, there is no one-size-fits-all course of study or discernment. However, it is important to remember that questions pertaining to Licensing, Commissioning, and Member in Discernment Status (MIDs) are issues for the MID in prayerful and frequent consultation with her or his Association Committee on Ministry. More information on the Member in Discernment Process is available on the United Church of Christ website (http://www.ucc.org/ministers_marks). Students and Committees on Ministry should make themselves very familiar with these documents and processes.

Students in the Penn West Academy must attend all four regular sessions plus the Boundary Training each academic year for 4 years. If a student misses more than one of these five total sessions in an academic year, he or she must repeat the year. Students should notify the Dean if they will be absent or if there are any circumstances that may alter their status as students in the Academy. Each student will be appointed a faculty mentor, with whom they must meet each academic year. The Dean and Faculty will report annually (usually in late May) on the progress of students to the Conference Committee on Ministry.

The Penn West Academy expects students to abide by a Code of Conduct informed by Christian values and practices. Relying on God's grace, students should live lives of honesty, prayer, Bible reading, and impartiality/fairness to others. Students are expected to be in regular contact with the faculty and Dean in regards to specific assignments and expectation. All work is expected to be one's own. Proper attribution is expected if students cite ideas from other authors/sources. If students have questions about academic standards, they are encouraged to research proper citations and how to write a bibliography. The Dean has these resources.

After graduation, students will meet with their Association Committee on Ministry to satisfy any additional requirements. Association Committees on Ministry may require additional education, service, spiritual direction, and may appoint graduates permanent Association advisors.

2023-2024 PENN WEST ACADEMY FOR MINISTRY APPLICATION

Auditors: Fill out the application below and send to **Joseph Hedden, 3618 Hills Church Road, Murrysville, PA 15668.** (You do not need to complete the same steps as full load students.)

*Full-load students: Submit this application to **the chairperson of your Association Church and Ministry and to Joseph Hedden, Dean**, along with the following: 1). A written recommendation from your home church; 2). Three letters of reference (see below; including one from your pastor); 3). Proof of high school education; and 4). A short written statement about your sense of call to ministry.*

Name: _____

Address _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Occupation: _____

Local Church Membership: _____

Educational Background: _____

Church Activities: _____

Pastor's Reference & Contact Information: _____

Business Reference & Contact Information: _____

Character Reference & Contact Information: _____

After submitting this application and its supporting documentation, you will be asked to meet with your Association Committee on Ministry. Additionally, you are encouraged as a first step to work with your congregation to form a discernment committee. See the Manual on Ministry, <https://www.ucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Local-Church-Discernment-Committee-Best-Practices.pdf>