Penn West Academy for Ministry

Annual Catalogue

2024-2025

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**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 2024-2025. 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](mailto: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. Please contact the Dean for scholarship questions.

**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](http://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**

**Clarion:** The Rev. Barry Fillman 814-427-2468

1970 Big Run/Prescottville Rd.

Reynoldsville, PA 15851

**Juniata:** Mr. James Neatrour  814-937-0201

8810 King Saint Clair Road

Osterburg, PA 16667

jabez1924@gmail.com

**Lake Erie:** The Rev Glenn Sadler 724-588-1534

341 E. Jamestown Rd #74

Greenville, PA 16125

twosadlers59@gmail.com

**Pittsburgh:** The Rev Lisa Griffin 412 921-8242

644 Ridgemont Dr.

Pittsburgh PA 15220

lgucchot@live.com S

**Somerset:** The Rev/Dr Joseph Beer 814-442-3653

130 Forbes St

Somerset, PA 15501

[joseph.beer175@gmail.com](mailto:joseph.beer175@gmail.com)

**Westmoreland:** Rev. Shirley Musick 724-552-8684

717 Latrobe-Crabtree Rd.

Latrobe PA 15650

Bjsmusick@verizon.net

**FACULTY**

**The Rev. Joseph Hedden**

*Instructor in Theology and Dean of the Academy*

*4915 Sardis Road 412-956-5252*

*Murrysville, PA 15668* hills.church.3618@gmail.com

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*](mailto: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.

**Ciera James**

*Instructor in Church History*

*757-434-5374*

Cici James is a graduate of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary where she earned a Master of Divinity and Graduate Certificate in Urban Ministry. She completed the joint degree program and obtained a Masters in Social Work from The University of Pittsburgh simultaneously. She is a licensed social worker and is in the ordination process with the UCC.

**The Rev. Dr. Jonathan Lawrence**

*Instructor in Old Testament*

*398 McKinley Avenue*

*Kenmore, NY 14217*

*Email:* [*yonatan1970@gmail.com*](mailto:yonatan1970@gmail.com)

*Phone: 716-462-8201*

Rev. Dr. Lawrence is an Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Theology at Canisius University in Buffalo, where he has taught since 2005.  He is also the Pastor of St. Peter's United Church of Christ in North Tonawanda, NY.  He is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and has traveled in Israel, Jordan, India, and Fiji.

**Melissa McLean**

*Instructor in Worship and Preaching*

*707 Follett Run Rd*

*Warren, PA 16365*

*Email:* [*mclean.melissa.a@gmail.com*](mailto:mclean.melissa.a@gmail.com)

*Phone: 814-706-9930*

Melissa McLean is a licensed lay minister with the Clarion Association and an alumna of the Penn West Academy for Ministry. She holds a Master of Divinity with a Chaplaincy Concentration from Chicago Theological Seminary and a Master of Education focused on Adult Learners from Elmira College.

**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 offers a comprehensive exploration of the theology behind Christian preaching and worship. We will delve into the liturgical, exegetical, homiletical, theological, and pastoral elements that shape worship and preaching. Students will engage in both practical and didactic assignments designed to deepen their understanding of not just the underlying philosophy, but also the practical application of these practices. \*All fourth-year students are required to submit a Worship & Preaching portfolio/project **before** the final class. With approval from their association advisor, this project *may* be included in their Members in Discernment portfolio.

**2024-2025 STUDENTS**

**Harvey Noel:** (Christ Church, United Church of Christ), Latrobe, PA 15650.

724-863-4193. [noelharv52846@gmail.com](mailto:noelharv52846@gmail.com) Entering Year 3

**Cory Childers:** (St. John’s United Church of Christ, Bedford), 6605 Milligans Cove Road. 814-310-1154. cfc161@icloud.com

Entering Year 2

**Dave Creamer:** (Unity United Church of Christ), Shanksville, Berlin, PA 15530. Phone 814-777-2280 email [dmc159@psu.edu](mailto:dmc159@psu.edu) Entering Year 2

**Christina Lonsinger** (Faith United Church of Christ, Altoona) 3 Duff Drive Altoona PA 16602. Phone: 814-650-9486. Email: [christinapoppinz@gmail.com](mailto:christinapoppinz@gmail.com)

Entering Year 2.

**Rhonda Hose:** (Salem United Church of Christ, Frostburg MD). 33W Co0llege Avenue, Frostburg, MD 21532. Phone: 240-979-7250. Email: esl.instruction123@gmail.com.

Entering Year 1

**Bonnie Skelley:** (Faith United Church of Christ, Altoona), 405 Clair Street, Altoona, PA 16601. Phone: 814-505-3208. Email: [BSkelley72@gmail.com](mailto:BSkelley72@gmail.com). Entering Year 1.

**Brian Woy:** (First Ebensburg), 160 Jamesway Road, Ebensburg. Phone: 814-248-5182.

Email: [brianwoy@hotmail.com](mailto:brianwoy@hotmail.com). Entering Year One.

**Course Schedule 2024-2025 Dates:**

**Thursday, September 5, 2024 6-9 pm: Special Block & Church History**

**Saturday, September 7, 2024  8 am to 4:20 pm**

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**Thursday, October 10, 2024 6-9 pm: Special Block & Church History**

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**Friday, March 7, 2025 6-8 pm: Special Block & Church History**

**Saturday, March 8, 2025 8 am to 4:20 pm**

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**Friday, May 9, 2024 6-8 pm: Special Block & Church History**

**Saturday, May 10, 2025 8 am to 4:20 pm**

**Our Hosts:**

**First Reformed United Church of Christ**

**312 South Maple Avenue**

**Greensburg PA 15601**

Special Block: **Practical Theology.** The 2024-2025 Special Blocks will be team taught by the Penn West Academy Faculty and guests. The content will be issues that are not normally covered in the curriculum; that is, church administration, legalities of performing a wedding, pastoral reports, maintaining records, trauma-informed pastoral care, running committee meetings, task forces, reading a budget, stewardship, and so on. The goal of this Special Block is to integrate the more ‘mechanical’ parts of ministry into theology, spirituality, worship, and your own practices or habits.

**Tentative Schedule:** The regular schedule for these sessions is as follows:

*Evening Classes: 6:00-7:20 PM Special Block*

*7:30-8:50 PM Church History*

*Saturday Classes: 8:00-9:20 AM Worship and Preaching*

*9:30-10:50 AM Theology*

*11:00AM-12:20 PM Hebrew Bible*

*12:20-1:30PM Lunch*

*1:30-2:50PM New Testament*

*3:00-4:20PM Covenant & Polity*

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.

**2024-2025 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:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Telephone:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Email:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Local Church Membership:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Educational Background:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Church Activities:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Pastor’s Reference & Contact Information:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Business Reference & Contact Information:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Character Reference & Contact Information:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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***This application will be shared with the Conference Committee on Ministry as well as the Penn West Academy Faculty.***

***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***