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Register Now for Lenten Learning Day 2019

Registration is now open for Lenten Learning Day 2019, **Saturday, March 23**, at [St. Brendan's Episcopal Church](#) in Franklin Park. This will be a special day of learning, worshipping, and building relationships with others across our diocese and communities.

The theme for this year's event is **Good News Within Reach**. Come and learn about some of the mission and ministry taking place throughout our diocese – directly from the people who lead and participate in it. Ponder together how similar forms of mission and ministry might work in your own parish and community context. Get the practical tips and helpful resources you need to join in God's work in the world.



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Special Guest Speaker: Father Paul Abernathy



We are thrilled to be welcoming Father Paul Abernathy as our special guest speaker this year. Father Abernathy is pastor of St. Moses Orthodox Christian Mission in Pittsburgh's Hill District and director of [FOCUS Pittsburgh](#), a non-profit specializing in Trauma-Informed Community Development. Since its inception in 2011, FOCUS Pittsburgh has distributed millions of dollars in food, clothing, furniture, transportation assistance, and emergency relief to the Greater Pittsburgh community. The group's Backpack Feeding Program distributes food to 2,500 children every weekend during the school year. Father Abernathy is also CEO of the FOCUS Pittsburgh Free Health Center, which offers free primary, behavioral health, and dental care to the area's uninsured and underinsured. Father Abernathy and his ministry were recently featured in the [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#).

What Else is in Store?

Here's a look at the rest of this year's lineup:

Bishop's Panel: "Getting to Know Your Neighbors"

Who are your neighbors? What do they care about, and what are their common points of concern? What resources are plentiful in your community, and what needs are being left unmet? How can you and your parish join in God's work in the world around you? Learn how others have discerned and discovered new ministry opportunities, and why it's important that you do, too.

Workshop Session 1

"Laundry Love" with Kathy Baird & the Rev. Joe Baird

Once a month, members of St. Peter's, Blairsville, spend two to three hours at a local laundromat, providing quarters, laundry supplies, and a whole lot of love to neighbors in need. Why laundry? How did they get started? What have they learned? Find out how this tiny parish is making a huge impact on the lives of those they meet and serve at the laundromat.

"St. Brendan's ESL Conversation Friends"

How does a neighbor become a friend? ... Through conversation, of course! Several times each week, our host parish provides a safe space for English as a Second Language (ESL) students – immigrants from around the world – to practice their speaking, listening, and comprehension skills, without fear of embarrassment or ridicule. The Rev. Regis Smolko and a team of "conversation friends" will share their experience with this unique new ministry, how it developed, and how it has led them beyond conversation, to other forms of relationship and assistance.

Workshop Session 2

"Addiction, Recovery & the Church" with the Rev. Dr. Canon Jay Geisler

Recently named by Bishop McConnell as our diocese's Canon for Recovery Ministries, the Rev. Dr. Jay Geisler has helped St. Peter's, Brentwood, connect with the "12-Steppers" meeting in its basement in unique and meaningful ways. Learn how your parish might do the same (even without a "Father Jay"), and discover other ways to help neighbors affected by the addiction epidemic.

"Resourcing a Community" with the Rev. Jennifer Peters McCurry and Andy Muhl

We may want to help our neighbors in need, but often, we just don't know how. Pastor McCurry, coordinator of the [Downtown Pittsburgh Ministerium's](#) walk-in ministry, along with Andy Muhl, integral in our diocese's participation in the ministry, will suggest ways that your parish can be ready to respond to whatever needs are brought to your doorstep. What physical resources should you (and should you not) keep on hand? What relationships should you forge with human services organizations in the area? What should you do when you suspect the help being asked for isn't the help that's really needed? Who can you call when the problem seems just too big? Explore these questions and more in this very informative session.

Celebration of Holy Eucharist

Our preacher for this year's Lenten Learning Day Eucharist will be the Rev. Torrey O. Johnson, priest-in-charge of Church of the Holy Cross in Homewood. Music will be led by Ms. Brenda Harris of All Saints, Brighton Heights. Bishop McConnell will celebrate.

What You Need to Know

If you're interested in attending, here's what you need to know:

- A tentative agenda is [available here](#). If you can't be with us for the whole day, that's okay. Attend for as long as you're able. Please still register, and be sure to check, or leave unchecked, the "I'm planning to eat lunch there" box as appropriate to assist us in our planning.
- **This is a free event!** There is no charge to participate. However, a freewill offering will be collected to help cover the cost of food and refreshments. Also, the collection at the Eucharist will be given to Father Abernathy's ministry, FOCUS Pittsburgh. Please be generous.
- Child care will be available. Please indicate your child care needs when registering.
- If you are planning to attend with others from your parish, consider splitting up during the workshop sessions so that you have more ideas and information to take back with you. Also, please consider carpooling to prevent any shortage of parking.

We look forward to seeing you at Lenten Learning Day 2019. Please register today!

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