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This issue is content rich and some email programs (like Gmail) may clip it partway through with a notice to click a link to see Grace Happens in its entirety. Please click that link to see how alive our diocese is during the early summer months.



Grounded in Christ Growing Anew!

June 25, 2025

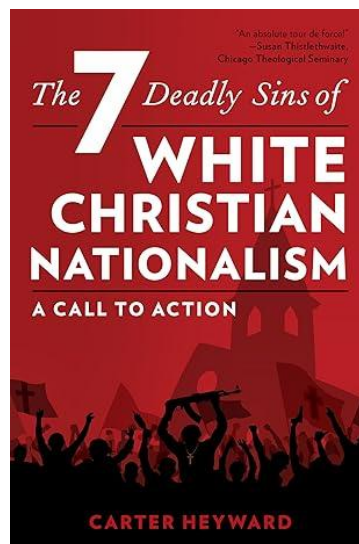
Summer Book Study Recommendation

Because of our concern about the increasing misuse of Christian tradition in support of violence, racism and other evils, the Beloved Community, the Commission on Race and Reconciliation, and the Diocesan Social Justice and Outreach Committee recommend reading Carter Heyward's book, *The Seven Deadly Sins of White Christian Nationalism*, and encourage members of the diocese to discuss it. We believe this is the most important issue facing the Church today.

Heyward, one of the Philadelphia Eleven, the first women ordained as Episcopal priests, teaches at Episcopal Theological Seminary; her book is a compelling analysis of how Christian language is being used to promote hatred, and how we can counter structures of injustice and bring healing and love. It is an ideal focus for discussion groups in parishes and beyond.

A recent review begins, "As a professor, theologian, activist, and writer, Heyward has been a pioneer in the areas of feminist liberation theology and the theology of sexuality. In this, her eighteenth book, she takes on the 'unholy trinity' of Christianity, capitalism, and the GOP' by calling for Christian Americans to take on the urgent moral work of confronting religious authoritarianism and speaking out 'on behalf of a God of justice, love, and peace'

Read more of the review [here.](#)



JUSTICE & FREEDOM: GOD'S STORY IN PITTSBURGH

An Interfaith Series on Scripture, Society & Hope

Hosted by Rabbi Daniel Fellman at Temple Sinai
and the Rev. Canon Natalie Hall at Church of the Redeemer

2025 Summer sessions held at Church of the Redeemer
(5700 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15217) with more information
for fall sessions forthcoming.

First Wednesday of Each Month from June 4, 2025
through April 15, 2026 • 7:00-8:30 PM

Each session includes large group study, small group conversation,
and a special presentation by Pittsburgh leaders
pursuing justice and freedom for our community.



Optional May 2026 Trip:

Participants will have the opportunity to visit
Legacy Freedom sites in the U.S. South, The
group trip is an optional part of the study series.



Scan the QR code
for more details
and to register:

[Click here to sign up](#)

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F4CAEAE2FA3FAC52-56936917-justice>

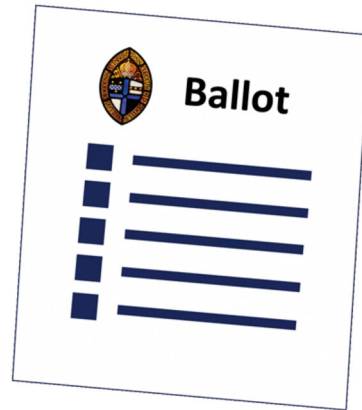


Nominations Open for Diocesan Governing Bodies and Committees

The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh is now welcoming nominations of clergy and lay persons for election to membership on various governing bodies and committees of the Diocese. The Nominating Committee is accepting nominations for elections to be held at the Diocesan Convention on November 15, 2025. This year's convention will be held at Trinity Cathedral, Downtown.

This year we will be electing:

- One lay person to the Board of Trustees
- One lay person to the Growth Fund
- One clergy and one layperson to:
 - the Standing Committee
 - the Cathedral Chapter
 - the Committee on Constitution and Canons
- One lay person to the Disciplinary Board
- One person (clergy or lay) to the Commission on Ministry
- Four clergy and four lay deputies and four clergy and four lay alternates as Deputies to General Convention held in Phoenix, AZ, in 2027



For more information on the work of the Boards and Committees, please [click here](#).

Multiple candidates for open positions are accepted and encouraged. All positions carry a term of three years (ending in 2028) except for the Standing Committee which has a four-year term (ending in 2029).

Nomination forms have been mailed to all parishes in the Diocese and are [available here](#).



Holy Hikes Southwest Pennsylvania Schedule w/trails for 2025 season

St. Michael's of the Valley, Ligonier and St. Francis in the Fields, Somerset have partnered to launch an official chapter of [Holy Hikes](#) in the Diocese, known as Holy Hikes of Southwest Pennsylvania. We piloted a series of hikes in 2024, as a way to test how the ministry would go and to understand how congregations might collaborate. After a successful initial season, we are ready to launch the ministry diocesan-wide.



The hiking season runs from May to October, although our official launch is delayed until June this year, and the hikes take place in the morning on the third Saturday of each month. We will start the hikes at 10 a.m., but some of the team will be there about 15 minutes early to welcome hikers. (If the weather is forecast to be hot, we may move the start time to 9:00 a.m. Please look for announcements on Facebook from the diocese.

The hiking schedule for 2025 is:

Saturday, July 19, 2025 - 10:00 am

[Winnie Palmer Nature Reserve](#) (Latrobe) - Multiple trails making a loop - 1.5 miles easy (young family friendly)

Saturday, August 16, 2025 - 10:00 am

[Johnstown Flood National Memorial](#) - Carriage Road Nature Trail - 1.15 miles - easy - with an optional .10 mile trail to the South Abutment and a .34 mile trail

with lots of steps to the bottom of the dam (more difficult)

Saturday, September 20, 2025 - 10:00 am

[Indian Creek Valley Trail](#) - Melcroft to Indian Head section - 2.75 miles - easy

Saturday, October 18, 2025 - 10:00 am

Ohiopyle State Park - [Meadow Run Trail](#) - 2.9 miles - easy



During the hike, we hold a service of Holy Communion, stopping along the trail to read the scripture and say the prayers, while sharing the Eucharist at the end of the hike or at another appropriate setting along the trail. It's a lovely way to have a worship service!

If you or your congregation are interested in participating—and, perhaps, hosting hikes in your part of the Diocese, we invite you to join us for one of our hikes over the summer to see how we do them and learn more about how we determine which trails to use. Once you decide to host your own hike, we will coordinate communications about the various hiking locations for those third Saturdays during the hiking season. Our hope is that each monthly Holy Hike

Saturday will have 3 or more options for hikes in different areas of the Diocese, and we encourage groups of congregations to partner with each other to host them.

In addition, we believe this is an important opportunity for members of the Diocese to invite friends, family, and neighbors—especially those who might not want to attend a Sunday morning service—to something a bit different. We have found it's a wonderful way to build community beyond our four walls.

If you are interested in participating this year, please contact our ministry team member [Katie Ong](#). You can also look for information about upcoming hikes on the [Diocese's Facebook page](#), in the "Events" section of the [St. Francis website](#) and [St. Francis Somerset Facebook page](#), as well as on [St. Michael's Holy Hikes webpage](#) and its [Facebook page](#).





St. Peter's Episcopal Church

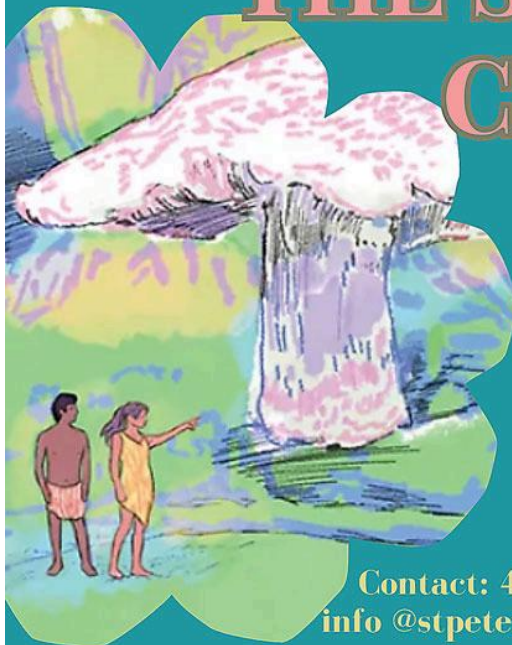
4048 Brownsville Rd. Pgh. PA 15227

Vacation Bible School

July 7 - 9

Dinner at 5:30 PM
Fun & Learning 6 - 8 PM

THE STORY OF CREATION



Open to all children
from K - Grade 6

\$5 suggested
donation per child

Scan code
to register!



Contact: 412 - 884 - 5225
info @stpetersbrentwood.org

[Click here to register](#)

Contact Rachel at info@stpetersbrentwood.org or 412-884-5225 with any questions.



Diocesan Transitions for June, 2025

Ordination

The Rev. Nicole (Nikki) Starr was ordained to the transitional diaconate by Bishop Ketlen on June 14, 2025. The service took place at Trinity Cathedral in Downtown Pittsburgh.

Installation

The Very Rev. Aidan Smith was formally installed as the sixth Dean of Trinity Cathedral by Bishop Ketlen on June 15,



2025. Aidan was appointed Provost of Trinity Cathedral in March 2019 and elected as Dean in June 2020.

Retirement

The Rev. Bill Geiger will retire from active ministry effective July 1, 2025. Bill is the Rector of Christ Church, Indiana, where he has served since 1999. The Feast of the Ascension on May 29 was Bill's last service celebrating and preaching at Christ Church. He will return to the parish on Sunday, June 29, for A Service for the Ending of a Pastoral Relationship and Leave-Taking from a Congregation led by Canon Kim Karashin. Bill and his wife Kate plan to remain resident in Indiana, PA, following Bill's retirement.

Death

The Rev. Dr. Francis (Frank) Yesko passed away on Wednesday, May 14, at home after a year-long battle with multiple health issues. Frank served as the Priest-in-Charge of St. Barnabas, Brackenridge, and is greatly missed by the members of that congregation and by friends and colleagues throughout the diocese.



Pancake Breakfast, Bake Sale, and Flea Market in Homestead



Saturday, August 2, 2025, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

[St. Matthew's Episcopal Church](#)

336 East 10th Avenue, Homestead, PA 15120

Pancake Breakfast is pay as you can
Buy a table to sell your own items \$25.00
Questions? Email jan_kusserow@yahoo.com



Diocesan Office Summer Hours

Bishop Ketlen has given the office staff permission to work from home until 2 p.m. on Fridays between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

The staff will be maintaining their normal work hours from Monday to Thursday.

Email and voicemail will be monitored and responded to as needed on Fridays.



The office will be closed on Friday, July 4, in observation of Independence Day.



Around the Diocese



Bishop Ketlen's Schedule:

June 29: St. Michael's, Ligonier

August 1: Shepherd Wellness Community, Bloomfield (5 p.m.)

Parish leadership is reminded to complete a form, available in [PDF](#) or [Word](#), at least two weeks in advance of their visitation.

To schedule time with Bishop Ketlen, contact Andrea Rath at 412-721-0853, ext. 251, or arath@episcopalpgh.org.



Parting Shots

Staff Commissioning at Calvary Camp

Bishop Ketlen gathered with the staff of [Sheldon Calvary Camp](#) during their orientation time to commission them for a joyous 2025 summer camping season on Thursday, June 19.



--Photo courtesy the Rev. Canon Joann Saylor

Ordination to the Diaconate

The Rev. Nicole (Nikki) Starr was ordained to the transitional diaconate by Bishop Ketlen on June 14, 2025. The service took place at Trinity Cathedral in Downtown Pittsburgh.



The Very Rev. Aidan Smith Instituted as Dean of Trinity Cathedral

The Very Rev. Aidan Smith was officially instituted as the Dean of Trinity Cathedral, Downtown Pittsburgh, during Bishop Ketlen's annual visit on Trinity Sunday, June 15. Center photo, R to L, Lizzy Williams was reaffirmed, Alexandria Zeder was confirmed, Dean Aidan, and Bill Bates was reaffirmed. The Cathedral presented Dean Aidan and Bishop Ketlen with official painted portraits to be hung in the parish hall.



Mission Trip to West Virginia

A group of youth and adult missionaries from St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon, spent a week in Welch and Bluefield West Virginia building porches, repairing homes, serving meals, running a reading camp, and much more during the week starting on June 8.





Redeemer, Squirrel Hill, Visitation

Bishop Ketlen visited the Church of the Redeemer in Squirrel Hill on Sunday, June 22. It was day of celebration as there were 3 confirmations, 8 receptions, and 12 reaffirmations.





Lorrie Esch, pictured here with the Rev. Canon Natalie Hall, her husband Ken Esch, and Bishop Ketlen, was honored for her longtime service to Redeemer.

Blessing a Steeple in Brackenridge

Bishop Ketlen became the "Flying Bishop" when she visited the St. Barnabas in Brackenridge on Sunday, June 8. The bishop blessed the newly refurbished steeple from a high lift in memory of their beloved Father Frank Yesko who died on May 14. More pictures and some wonderful videos of the blessing are available on [St. Barnabas' Facebook page](#).





Bishop Ketlen with three newly-received members of St. Barnabas Bonnie Tomson, Paula Molobicky, and Jane Ann Chisko.

--Photos courtesy Karen Davidek

