

PITTSBURGH PASTORAL CARE CONFERENCE

FRIDAY MAY 8, 2026 (8:00 am - 4:00 pm)

**St. John & Paul Catholic Church -- St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic Parish
2586 Wexford Bayne Road, Wexford, PA 15143**

WELCOMING ALL

**Pastors, Laity, Counselors, Social Workers, Nurses, Teachers, Students, Volunteers,
Caregivers and Others in the Flock Helping Those Needing Healing**

Conference Theme

Shining a light on the connection between pastoral care issues and spirituality

Conference Program

8:00 am – Breakfast & Fellowship

8:20 am – Opening Prayer

**Fr. Joe Carr, St. John and Paul Catholic Church
St. Luke the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church**

Welcome

The Rev. Graham Standish, Ph.D. Samaritan Counseling PA

8:30 am – Opening Remarks

**The Most Rev. Bishop Mark A. Eckman, Bishop
Roman Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh**

**9:00 am – Special Guest Speaker
Religion in the Digital Age**

**Rabbi Danny Schiff, Community Scholar
Jewish Federation of Pittsburgh & Author**



Rabbi Danny Schiff

www.pghpcc.org

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10:00 am - Keynote Address

**Transformed by the Renewal of your Mind:
Using Biblically Grounded and Cognitive Behavioral
Therapy (CBT) Based Approaches**

**Dr. Deborah Moon, Ph.D., Associate Professor
University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work
& Department of Psychiatry**



11:00 am - 11:15 am Break Visit Exhibit Tables

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**11:15 am - 12:30 pm – Session One
(Five Choices)**

A1. Whole Person Addiction Care – Medication Assisted Treatment, Spirituality and Psychosocial Care

Mark W. Guy, M.D., Addiction Medicine, Center for Inclusion Health, Allegheny Health Network

Learn how the interplay between neurobiology, Medication Assisted Treatment, spirituality and the human psyche can work together as a framework for caring for people struggling with addiction. Together, a comprehensive continuum of care can help keep people involved in treatment and improve recovery outcomes.

A2. Transcendence Therapy and the Dynamics of Crisis

Dr. Susan Muto, Ph.D., Executive Director and Dean and Steven Geitgey, Ph.D., Publications Manager and Faculty, Epiphany Academy of Formative Spirituality and Epiphany Association

Human lives are marked by a series of crises of transition where a person's options lie between a less or more transcendent attunement with a newly emergent form of life. This workshop will focus on Adrian van Kaam's theory and practice of "transtherapy" – a process that assists people before, after, and especially during a transcendence crisis.

A3. Dance with Me: An Introduction to Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT)

Fabyonne Williams, Ed.D. Christian Counseling Collaborative

This workshop introduces participants to Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT), a proven, evidence-based approach for improving emotional connection in relationships. Drawing on the science of adult attachment, EFT helps individuals and couples identify negative interaction patterns, process core emotions, and develop secure, lasting bonds. Participants will gain practical skills to foster healthier, more resilient relationships within their congregations and clinical practices.

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A4. Women and Children: Rebuilding Broken Lives and Families Panel

1. Tom Grden, Ph.D., Moderator & Director, Resurrection Life Ministries
2. Leah Dietrich, Director of Women & Children, Washington City Mission
3. Erin Casey Phillips, OTD, OTR/L, Program Manager, Gift of Mary, Move a Mountain Missions
4. Clara Stephenson, Mission Integration Coordinator, Move a Mountain Missions

Learn about “safe haven approaches” for particularly vulnerable individuals-- women with dependent children, and veterans who face challenges of isolation, poverty, and homelessness. These ministries help people transition from homelessness and relational abandonment to personal wholeness and Godly independent living in a compassionate, friendly, and safe Christ-centered environment while offering free meals, clothing and shelter, as well as medical care, addiction recovery programs, career and job training, and life-skill rebuilding skills.

A5. The Experimental Church: Helping People Encounter God, Not Just Hear about Him

The Rev. Jordan Rimmer, Pastor, Northminster Presbyterian Church, New Castle

Participants will be introduced to the creative idea of the Experiential Church – a way of doing ministry that helps people engage God through creative and participatory worship experiences. Participants will gain practical ideas to try, as well as principles for creation of their own experiences.

12:30 pm - Lunch & Visit Exhibit Tables

1:30 pm - Presentation Dave Else Award

The Rev. Canon Dr. Jay Geisler & Karen Plavan, Ph.D.

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1:45 pm - 3:00 pm – Session Two
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B1. Emerging Drug Trends: What's New....and Frightening!

Mark G. Fuller MD, FACP, FASAM, Medical Director, Carelon

For health care workers providing care and counseling to people who use illicit substances, it is critical to stay up to date with current trends and scientific research. This presentation will highlight new and emerging trends both across the nation and here in Pennsylvania. A new contaminant in the illicit opioid supply chain is having disastrous consequences on both the individuals using illicit opioids, but also the healthcare system that is attempting to care for them. There will also be a review of the changing nature of Cannabis products as the purity levels continue to increase. The change in the world of methamphetamines will be looked at as the increased purity along with the decrease in price is making it an increasingly lucrative drug to traffic. There will also be an overview of some of the “legal drugs” that are easy to obtain such as Kratom, 7-OH, and other designer drugs hitting the market.

B2. Emotions Anonymous and The History of the 12 Steps

The Rev. Canon Dr. Jay Geisler, Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh, Life Building Ministries
Pam Birr, BA, Clinical Supervisor, Pittsburgh Recovery Center

Learn the basic ABC's of the 12 Step program and how they emerged over time through the FirstCentury Christian Fellowship, the Oxford Group, Bill W. & Dr. Bob, and others who paved the way for a modern spiritual revolution. Learn how to adapt the 12 Steps to help more people through Emotions Anonymous (EA) groups that offer peer support to people experiencing a wide range of emotional and mental health challenges such as Mistaking Emotions for Reality, Control, Loneliness, Fear, Resentments, Anger, Indecision, Perfectionism, Forgiveness, Grief, Anxiety, Procrastination, Self-Pity, Trust, Love, Hope, Patience, etc.

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B3. "Why Can't You Just be Normal? Understanding Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in Pastors and Members"

Samantha Baillie, Ph.D., MA, LPC, Clinical Director, Samaritan Counseling-Guidance-Consulting
The Rev. Graham Standish, Ph.D., MDiv, MA, MSW, Executive Director, Samaritan Counseling-Guidance-Consulting

As more people learn about Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), we gain a better understanding of its effects on everyday life. A significant number of clergy and church members have ADHD, and face both challenges and criticism. This workshop will explore what ADHD really is, its stigma, struggles, and strengths. We'll explore how those with ADHD can tap into its inherent creativity, while also learning how to lead in ways that diminish its pitfall.

B4. Human & Sex Trafficking Panel

Tom Grden, Ph.D., Moderator & Director, Resurrection Life Ministries
Elizabeth Echevarria, Founder & CEO, Living in Liberty
Linda Kricher, Executive Director, Her Safe Haven
Joseph Sweeney, Co-Founder, CEO, Board Chairman, The Asservo Project
Sue Willis, Founder & Executive Director, Beyond Survival Ministries and Author

Gain a broad view of the global war on human trafficking and about local ministry practitioners about situations in our own communities that often lead vulnerable young women into various forms of sexual exploitation; how interventions and rescue can take place; and about the compassionate forms of aftercare to protect personal dignity and bring about restoration and wholeness. These programs empower survivors, provide time to heal, and address their trauma in Christ-centered ministries.

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B5. Churches as Peacemakers in a Fractured Society

The Rev. Liddy Barlow, Executive Minister, Christian Associates of SW PA

Polarization and political violence are on the rise. How can churches bridge divides and encourage respectful dialogue in our communities? Learn from an international peacemaking organization “Search for Common Ground” the factors that make for peace and simple practices that can help every church to become a peacemaker.

Closing Prayer

**The Rev. Liddy Barlow, Executive Minister,
Christian Associates of SW PA**