

Our new Eastern PA Conference Domestic Violence Committee will help congregations address this widespread, lethal problem through a conference-wide educational and planning event.

Churches have an important commitment to address domestic and family violence as part of their Christian ministry. You will learn how your church can understand the impacts of trauma, provide safety and support for survivors, and respond to one of the most pervasive, but too often hidden, public health concerns in society.

“Domestic Violence: The Faith Community Responds” will feature as keynoter the Rev. Lydia Mulkey from the Seattle-based the FaithTrust Institute. Mulkey has taught faith leaders about:

- domestic and sexual violence prevention and intervention,
- maintaining healthy boundaries to prevent ministerial misconduct, and
- teenage trauma, relationship boundaries and other topics.

Workshops will focus on:

- **Pastoral and Congregational Care:** A Faithful Response to Domestic Violence.
- **The AMEND program,** designed to help men identify beliefs and attitudes that support abusive behaviors, and help them approach relationships with respect, equality and fairness instead.
- **Are We Ready for Gen Z?** How does domestic violence affect the post-millennial, school-age Generation Z? How can we help them understand, prevent and respond to DV in their social environments? A workshop especially for parents, guardians, youth ministers and teens.

We will also provide a planning session and a toolkit of resources to help your church respond to domestic violence in its community. Learn more at <https://www.epaumc.org/conference-calendar/a-faithful-response-to-domestic-violence>.

Domestic Violence: The Faith Community Responds

**The Rev.
Lydia Mulkey**

FaithTrust
INSTITUTE



Saturday, November 17th, 2018

9 AM – 2 PM at West Lawn UMC, Reading, PA
\$15 to register by November 1. \$20 to register after November 1.

Register: <https://www.eiseverywhere.com/dvfaith>

Offering .20 CEUs for this event. Both laity and clergy are urged to attend. The conference Board of Ordained Ministry endorses this training event and highly recommends it to clergy.

October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Learn more at nnedv.org/get-involved/dv-awareness-month.



Believing and being there for domestic violence victims

She came to the United Methodist-sponsored DeafBlind Camp*, this young woman with a small child. Her husband dropped her off. She could neither see nor hear. But faithful volunteers interpreted for her, making tactile deaf signs in her hands. And they led her from place to place during the week of camp activities.

The woman who served as her support service provider sensed that she was burdened with something. After camp ended she went to visit "Audrey" at her home, and they formed a bond of friendship.

It was through that bond that the terrible truth about Audrey's husband came to light. He would beat her and kick her, and put things in her way, so she would fall and hurt herself. This was unbelievable cruelty behind closed doors.

Thanks to much intervention and support, the volunteer helped Audrey escape from this abusive environment, move out of the state with her young child, endure divorce and custody court proceedings, and begin a new life. It all started with a relationship and the simple fact that the volunteer believed her story and then did something about it.

Suffering in secret, silent agony

Many people are suffering in secret, silent agony because of abuse. That includes women and some men, attacked both in and outside of the home. Their abuse comes in the form of physical violence, sexual violence and emotional violence. Emotional violence can be as damaging as a fist.

Our churches can play an important role in prevention by teaching people about appropriate ways of dealing with anger, proper dating protocols and

the dangers of pornography. Our denomination's Commission on United Methodist Men has a wonderful, 8-week program to help men in our churches and communities. Adapted from a YWCA program, **Amending through Faith** seeks to cultivate a healthy masculinity that recognizes and challenges disrespect and violence against women as a stubborn cultural norm.

Everyone concerned about this destructive and deadly problem should attend **Domestic Violence: The Faith Community Responds, on November 17 at West Lawn UMC**. There will be a major address the Rev. Lydia Mulkey of the FaithTrust Institute and workshops, including one from the Amending through Faith program for men.

Come learn about the signs and solutions to domestic violence and ways that we as the Body of Christ can help end this deadly, widespread scourge on our society's treatment of women and families. We must get more involved, so we can become wellsprings of healing and hope for wounded victims, many of whom don't believe the church cares or is willing or able to help.

Many times, a victim will summon the courage to tell their story; but too often they are not believed. They may even be punished or ostracized for it. The fear of this syndrome prevents many from coming forward to tell their stories of often terrible abuse. Instead, they keep it hidden, like a festering sore on their souls. And it never heals or disappears.

Believe people when they have the courage to tell the truth. But don't just stop there. Believing means doing something about it. It means coming alongside persons to offer emotional support. It means:

- helping victims with escape plans and financial support,
- helping both victim and perpetrator find needed therapy,
- supporting "safe" houses in your area that provide transitional services,
- posting signs in bathroom stalls about how to get help, etc.

We must step out and take risks to help victims. Liberating truth is costly, but it is also a sign of our belief and discipleship in Jesus Christ. His depth of compassionate love and his actions to heal and set free oppressed persons should be our example.

By Bishop Peggy Johnson
Adapted from an essay in The Bishop's Blog

**The DeafBlind Camp of Maryland provides a safe, fun, barrier-free week for persons who have significant hearing and vision loss. Bishop Peggy Johnson helped start the camp in 1998 and led camps there for 10 years until she was elected a bishop.*

