

## 2026 South-East Regional Tools for Ministry Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup>

**LOCATION:** Palmer Theological Seminary at Eastern University  
The McInnis Building  
1300 Eagle Road, Wayne, PA 19087

**SCHEDULE:**

8:30-9:00am Registration & Breakfast Refreshments  
9:00-9:15am Plenary - Opening Devotions  
9:15-10:45am Session 1 Workshop  
10:45-11:00am Break & Transition to next Room  
11:00-12:30pm Session 2 Workshop

Online Registration - \$15

\*Free Parking is available\*

<b>Workshops</b>	<b>Presenters</b>
<b>“BRIDGES: Cultivating Curiosity &amp; Community through Intergenerational Ministry”</b>	<b>*Ms. Ashley Wilson, EPA Staff</b>
<b>“Calling All Lay Leaders 4.0”</b>	<b>*Jennifer Lafferty, CLM *Frances Whittington, CLM</b>
<b>“Caregiver Selfcare &amp; Mental Health”</b>	<b>*Dr. Diana McNeil, CLM</b>
<b>“The Cutting Edge: Using AI Effectively &amp; Ethically to Enhance Your Ministry”</b>	<b>Mr. Harry Stymiest</b>
<b>“Effective Cross Racial/Cross Cultural Ministry in 2026”</b>	<b>Mr. Shawn Mack, CLM Mr. Dennis L. Fisher, M.M.</b>
<b>“Immigration &amp; Social Justice as Ministry”</b>	<b>*Rev. Mark Salvacion</b>
<b>“The Importance of Church Auditing”</b>	<b>*Pastor John Lafferty, CLM *Ms. Carol Barnes</b>
<b>“Orientation to Ministry”</b>	<b>Deaconess Darlene DiDomineck</b>
<b>“Reimagining Your Church Space”</b>	<b>Rev. James D. Anderman</b>
<b>“Why Faithful Churches Feel Stuck”</b>	<b>*Dr. Mike Nelson</b>

## Workshop Descriptions

### “BRIDGES: Cultivating Curiosity & Community through Intergenerational Ministry”

**Description of Workshop:**

How might bringing generations together help us build deeper connections with one another and our neighbors? In this interactive workshop, we will discover practical ways to cultivate spaces where children, youth, adults, and seniors can learn from one another, share stories of faith, and join in God's work of love in the world.

**Bio of Presenter: Ashley Wilson, Pathways Bridges Program Coordinator**

Ashley is passionate about the healing and transformation that takes place when individuals and churches cultivate meaningful, mutual, and authentic relationships within their communities. She has served as a US-2 Young Adult missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) and has previously served as the Director of Mission and Executive Assistant to the Director of Connectional Ministry in the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference. Ashley holds a Masters of Divinity (MDiv) and a Certificate in Faith and Health from Candler School of Theology, as well as a Bachelors of Arts (BA) in Psychology with a minor in Music.

### “Calling All Lay Leaders 4.0”

**Description of Workshop:** Whether you are a new Lay Leader or if you have served for many years in this capacity, no one needs to tell you - “the times, they are changing!”

Serving as Lay Leader can be a thrilling opportunity to empower, encourage and support, the congregation and the Pastor. Or one can feel directionless, inadequate, and defeated, without training and/or the fellowship of other Lay Leaders. We are told to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. That was challenging enough in the past, but now, how do we make disciples powerful enough to transform this world?

Where two or more are gathered, Jesus promised to be there. Come gather with us, Lay Leaders (and those being called to be Lay Leaders)! Let’s help each other get ready “for such a time as this”. The book “Conference and District Lay Leader Manual” (Discipleship Resources, Nashville) will be used in the workshop. The book can be purchased at [www.Cokesbury.com](http://www.Cokesbury.com) for a cost of \$10 +shipping.

**Bio for Presenters: Jennifer and Frances** are Co-Lay Leaders for the super South District. Jennifer has served as South District Lay Leader since 2016, Frances as of July 2022.

**Jennifer Lafferty** has been a member of the UMC for over 40 years. She is a Certified Lay Minister (CLM). She is also a Health Minister, certified by Wesley Theological, and the owner of a Health and Wellness business. Jennifer is the wife of a John Lafferty, the Pastor of Eddystone United Methodist Church. As South District Lay Leader, she has had the opportunity to serve on several Eastern PA Conference committees, District Committee on Ordained Ministry (DCOM), Conference Nominations and Leadership team, as well as representing her home church, Thorndale United Methodist Church, at Annual Conference as Lay Member. Jennifer has traveled to Liberia, West Africa to do missions work at SHALOCA Elementary School. She and her family established a non-profit (501c3) to enable them to receive donations in support of the school and several other projects to help marginalized children. She is a mother, a stepmother, and a grandmother.

**Frances Whittington** is a lifelong member of St. Daniel's United Methodist Church in Chester, PA. She is a Certified Lay Minister (CLM) and Co-South District Lay Leader. As an active member of the St. Daniel's church family, Frances has served in many roles, including Trustee Board president, and United Women in Faith (UWF) president. In 2013, Frances traveled to Haiti for a mission project with the United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM). She currently serves on the EPA UMC Loan Fund Board, as President; the Laity Academy Planning Committee [member and chaplain], and as the South District President of United Women in Faith.

## **“Caregiver Selfcare & Mental Health”**

### **Description of Workshop:**

The objective of this workshop is to introduce participants to the important roles caregivers play in the lives of loved ones and the impact on:

- (1) caregiver perceptions;
- (2) quality of caregiver’s health pre- and post-caregiving responsibilities; and
- (3) recommendations of coping strategies to lessen caregiver burden and improve health outcomes.

**Bio. for Presenter: Dr. Diana McNeil** is a semi-retired psychologist whose career has spanned well over 35 years. She has provided direct service in multiple settings including schools, community mental health, crisis and trauma counseling and private practice. Dr. McNeil provides comprehensive psychological services to children, adolescents and adults that may include cognitive, personality, neuropsychological and forensic assessments as dictated by the area of concern. Dr. McNeil has facilitated grief support groups within multiple settings in addition to individual therapy. Her preference is working with populations that have limited access to mental health services. Dr. McNeil received her Doctorate of Psychology (Psy.D), from Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine.

## **“The Cutting Edge: Using AI Effectively & Ethically to Enhance Your Ministry”**

### **Description of Workshop:**

This session will explore how artificial intelligence can be responsibly integrated into ministry contexts, highlighting both the opportunities it offers and the ethical considerations that must guide its use.

**Bio. for Presenter: Harry Stymiest** is a filmmaker, media educator, and web designer serving as Media Director at Somerton United Methodist Church and Video & Production Specialist for the Pennsbury School District. He is the founder of HVS MediaStudio LLC and a former Video Services Director at the Innabah Program Center, where he led video creation and media camps. Harry specializes in teaching practical, purpose-driven media tools for ministry, education, and storytelling.

## Effective Cross Racial/Cross Cultural (CR/CC) Ministry 2026

### Description of Workshop:

This training is designed to provide an overview of the tools available to clergy and congregations to help them stay focused on God's mission to minister effectively in our diverse cultural communities. Multiple "Meet & Greet" activities drawn from the cross racial/cross cultural (CR/CC) "Building Bridges" curriculum will be demonstrated as time permits. Participants will also examine the Biblical and theological foundations of serving in a CR/CC ministry context. Tools, common language, and resources will be offered to increase the effectiveness of our intercultural communication and improve our engagement throughout the diverse communities where we live and worship. Both challenges and opportunities of CR/CC ministry will be explored as we promote an expansion of the "kin-dom" of God. Technical assistance will be offered for additional training.

### Bio of Presenters:

**Shawn Mack, CLM**, is a faith-rooted leader and servant in the body of Christ, deeply committed to ministry, worship, and community transformation. A devoted member of Bickley's New Beginning UMC, he serves as Minister of Music and Administrative Council Co-Chair, where he leads worship, strengthens church governance, and helps guide the spiritual and organizational life of the congregation. His ministry reflects a deep passion for unity, discipleship, and building a church culture grounded in love, belonging, and service. Professionally, Shawn serves as the Vice President of Engagement for Valley Youth House, bringing over 15 years of dedicated service to youth and families. He is recognized for his expertise in team building, navigating difficult conversations, fostering inclusive environments, cultivating leadership development, and creating spaces of belonging. His leadership has contributed meaningfully to the growth and positive impact of the organization. Shawn is married to CLM Jacqueline Mack and have three sons.

**Dennis L. Fisher, M.M.**, is a retired mental health professional. Dennis has held positions as music therapist, case management supervisor and training specialist in Philadelphia's behavioral health system for over 40 years. Prior to retirement he served as Director of the Behavioral Health Training & Education Network, Philadelphia, PA. BHTEN has been responsible for orienting and training Philadelphia's mental health and substance abuse staff. Dennis is a Cross-Racial/Cross-Cultural trainer, and he serves as co-coordinator for the CR/CC Team of Trainers. Dennis is a member of the EPA Conference Commission on Religion and Race (CORR). He is a graduate of the Temple University Advanced Certificate Program in Culturally Competent Human Services. At Somerton UMC (Philadelphia), he serves as music director and worship leader, Lay Member to Annual Conference, and Chairperson of the Liberia Education Project – a non-profit "advanced special" recognized by the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference UMC. Dennis and his wife, Karen Fisher, also volunteer with the Somerton Interfaith Food Bank.

## "Immigration & Social Justice as Ministry"

**Description of Workshop:** "Immigration & Social Justice as Ministry" is a workshop designed to lead church leaders into growing social justice ministry in their contexts, using Immigration ministry as an example. The workshop will also cover areas including restorative justice, education equity, and neurodivergent ministry

### Bio. for Presenter:

**Rev. Mark Ignatius Salvacion** has served as lead pastor of St. Luke UMC in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania since July 2022. Previously, he served as Pastor of Historic St. George's UMC in Philadelphia from 2017 until 2022. Prior to entering into professional ministry, Rev. Salvacion was a practicing corporate attorney for 25+ years.

Rev. Salvacion's missional commitments include social justice, alleviation of poverty and food insecurity, criminal justice reform, immigration justice, and the critique of institutional racism. As a practicing immigration attorney, Rev. Salvacion has been engaged in advocacy for immigrants, asylum seekers, and persons in ICE detention for nearly a decade. For his work in immigration advocacy, Rev. Salvacion was awarded the "Valor in Pursuit of Justice" award from PRIME Ecumenical Commitment to Refugees in 2019.

Rev. Salvacion also leads two distinct ministries focused on creating sacred spaces for neurodivergent persons and on addressing the spiritual needs of local college students. For his work in civil rights and educational equity in Pennsylvania, Rev. Salvacion received the "Oscar B. Cobb, Sr. Civil Rights Advocacy" award from the NAACP Main Line Branch in October 2025.

## "The Importance of Church Auditing"

**Description of Workshop:** This workshop provides the procedures used to conduct a church audit. An audit is an independent evaluation of the internal controls of the church financial reports and records verifying the reliability of financial reporting and determine whether assets are being safeguarded and following the law and the Discipline.

### **Bio. for Presenters:**

**John Lafferty, CLM** is the pastor of Eddystone United Methodist Church. He also teaches college and high school finance and accounting courses in the Philadelphia area. He has taught past workshops in how to conduct effective church meetings and was a conference wide Safe Sanctuary Instructor for over 10 years. John is the chairperson for several nonprofit 501c3s in the Philadelphia area. John's BS Degree is in Business Administration from Drexel University, and his MS Degree is in Organizational Leadership from Cabrini University. John is a Certified Lay Minister.

**Carol Barnes** is a lay member of the Thorndale UMC, which she has served in varying capacities. Amongst her ongoing contributions to the church, she has assisted with the completion of the Church Audits for over many years. She looks forward to sharing pragmatic reflections and engaging in meaningful discussion with all that gather for this workshop.

## "Orientation to Ministry"

**Description of Workshop:** This workshop offers an engaging introduction for individuals who are discerning a call to ministry within The United Methodist Church. Grounded in the *Book of Discipline*, the session explores the theology of call, the diverse expressions of ministry (including lay, licensed, and ordained paths), and the structure of the candidacy and discernment process. Participants will reflect on their own sense of vocation, learn about the roles of the local church and district committees, and gain clarity about next faithful steps, all within a supportive, prayerful, and justice-centered framework that honors the movement of the Holy Spirit in communal discernment.

**Bio. for Presenter: Darlene DiDomineck**, a United Methodist Deaconess, is appointed to serve as the Executive Director of the Center-Philadelphia @ Arch Street United Methodist Church. The Center is a church-based community center offering daytime services with its unhoused/unsheltered neighbors. Arch Street UMC is a reconciling, justice-seeking and sanctuary congregation located in the heart of Center City

Philadelphia and is committed to intersectional, faith-based movements for social change. Darlene also currently serves as the Co-Chair of the East District Committee on Ministry (DCOM).

Darlene earned a Master of Divinity degree from Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York and a Bachelor of Arts in Women's Studies from The University of South Florida. Darlene is a 2023 Harry Denman Evangelism Award recipient. She currently serves as the Vice-Chair of the National Association of Deaconesses and Home Missioners (NADHM). Darlene began her ministry serving with the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) as a young adult missionary (US2) and answered her call to a lifetime ministry of love, justice and service as a Deaconess in 2007. She previously served as the interim Executive Director of the Methodist Federation for Social Action (MFSA), the denomination's oldest justice-seeking caucus responsible for the formation of the first Methodist Social Creed in 1907.

## “Reimagining Your Church Space”

### Description of Workshop:

When Jim became the pastor of Palmyra: First UMC in 2019, one of his *stated goals* was to raise the utility bills! *What???!?* The *real goal* was to have the building in use seven days a week. In the 5+ years since, that goal has largely been accomplished with a variety of activities, groups, and ministries using the facilities.

This workshop will discuss decisions to be made by local church Trustees and Councils if they want to open the church for new uses. It will offer a few options for new ministries, rental opportunities, and partnerships with other ministries. It will cover various ways church facilities can be used to generate revenue, publicize ministry, and provide services to the community. It will also cover insurance requirements as well as some potential pitfalls to be avoided.

**Bio. for Presenter: Rev. James D. Anderman** went into the ministry as a second career, after working in retail management for approximately 15 years. He currently serves on the EPA Conference Loan Board - which lends money to local churches for capital projects. He also serves the West District Committee on Church Building and Location which is involved guiding local churches doing major building projects. Jim graduated from Lycoming College with a degree in Business Administration and Master of Divinity (MDiv) from Moravian Theological Seminary.

## “Why Faithful Churches Feel Stuck”

### Description of Workshop:

Many churches love God, serve faithfully, and still wonder why growth has slowed or membership has plateaued. This Scripture-centered workshop helps pastors and leaders explore that tension without shame or quick fixes, offering space to reflect, discern, and rediscover confidence in God's ongoing work.

**Bio. for Presenter: Dr. Mike Nelson** is the Senior Pastor of Grace Community United Methodist Church and a practitioner of church revitalization. His revitalization work spans multiple ministry contexts, including congregational renewal through senior pastoral leadership and the development of sustainable youth ministry in churches where programs had ended or did not exist. With experience serving across multiple Christian denominations, he works alongside pastors and church leaders to discern faithful next steps rooted in Scripture and lived practice.