



PLACE
STAMP
HERE

Redemption and restoration are foundational beliefs for Christians. No one should forever be labeled by and punished for the mistakes of their past.

—Rev. Sandra L. Strauss
Director of Advocacy & Ecumenical Outreach,

The **Pennsylvania Council of Churches** is 43 church bodies and agencies representing 20 Anabaptist, Anglican, Orthodox, Pentecostal, and Protestant communions in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania working together for Christian unity for the sake of the world.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), a worldwide ministry of Anabaptist churches, shares God's love and compassion for all in the name of Christ by responding to basic human needs and working for peace and justice.

Pennsylvania Council of Churches
900 S. Arlington Avenue, Suite 211A
Harrisburg, PA 17109-5024

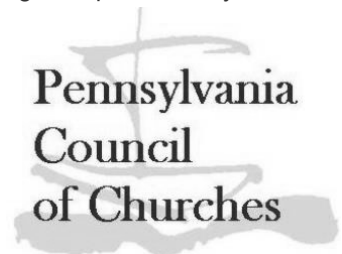


Faithful Advocacy for Criminal Justice Reform/Gun Violence: Principles and Practice

August 5/August 9, 2018

First United Methodist Church
5401 Centre Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15232

A joint program sponsored by:



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Tentative Schedule

Sunday, August 5

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| 1:30-1:45 pm | Setting the stage |
| 1:45-2:15 pm | Why this seminar/Why we do advocacy—scriptural/theological basis with specific emphasis on the Anabaptist perspective |
| 2:15-3:45 pm | What do we need to know about the US prison system and restorative justice? What do we need to know about gun violence? |
| 3:45-4:00 pm | Break |
| 4:00-5:15 pm | PA governing structure/"nuts and bolts" of advocacy: How do we make our case for reforms with elected officials? |
| 5:15-5:30 pm | Wrap-up and instructions for advocacy meetings. |

Thursday, August 9

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| 9:00 am* | Team preparation and legislative visits |
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*Tentatively, advocacy teams will meet at 9:00 am to prepare for meetings with legislators/staff by district. Actual meeting times are subject to legislator/staff availability, but planners will strive to schedule meetings on Thursday morning.

For more information:

Contact the Pennsylvania Council of Churches at (717) 545-4761 or send e-mail to s.strauss@pachurches.org.

Why Reform is Needed

Formerly incarcerated persons face a myriad of barriers that deny them the opportunity to become the kind of engaged, responsible citizens we claim to desire. Conditions in our prisons add to the problem. Punitive and extended use of solitary confinement creates or exacerbates mental health conditions for those who receive it. Health care is often lacking. Mandatory minimums have caused thousands of non-violent (primarily drug) offenders to spend years in prison, making reentry after release more difficult. Little is done to prepare incarcerated persons for reentry.

Advocates recently achieved success with passage of "Clean Slate" legislation that would automatically seal from public uses the records of persons with minor, non-violent misdemeanor convictions if they have remained conviction free for at least 10 years, as well as records on arrests that do not lead to convictions. But there is so much more that needs to be done.

Gun violence continues to be a problem in Pennsylvania as well. A number of bills have been proposed over the years to require better background checks, reporting of lost and stolen guns, purchasing limits of one gun/month, and banning of assault-style weapons and bump stocks. It has been difficult even to achieve small gains in very specific areas—like limiting gun access for domestic abusers.

People of faith from all points on the theological spectrum are supporting common sense legislation to address these issues, and benefit from knowing how to advocate effectively for the change they desire.

Why You Should Attend

Come to this program to learn why, as people of faith, we engage in advocacy—in broad terms, but with emphasis on why from an Anabaptist perspective. Come to learn more about this important legislation and why it is so important that people of faith support a bill that opens doors for our brothers and sisters who have served time. Come to learn how Pennsylvania governing structures work, and how to engage with your legislators and policy makers to support "Clean Slate." Then join with your neighbors to visit your Representatives to make the case for its passage.

Registration

Please complete, clip and mail or fax this registration information to the Pennsylvania Council of Churches **BY AUGUST 2**. You may also register online at www.pachurches.org (scroll down, click on link under "Events" on right).

Please print

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Title (Rev., etc.) _____ Position _____

Address 1 _____

Address 2 _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

Phone (best number to reach you—please include area code) _____

Name as you wish it to appear on name badge _____

Pennsylvania legislative districts (list district number & name) _____

Representative: _____

Senator: _____

If unknown, find your legislators at <http://www.legis.state.pa.us>.

I WILL participate in legislative visits on June 14 ☐

You may pay by check or credit card.

By check: Please include \$20 check payable to **Pennsylvania Council of Churches** and send to:

Pennsylvania Council of Churches
ATTN: Advocacy for Criminal Justice Reform
900 S. Arlington Avenue, Suite 211A
Harrisburg, PA 17109-5024

By credit card: Follow payment link from online registration form; click on link under "Events" at www.pachurches.org.