

# PTS NEWS



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# PTS RECEIVES PCUSA GRANT FOR MENTAL HEALTH MINISTRY

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary has received a \$10,000 Presbyterian Mental Health Ministry Grant to equip rural congregational leadership to provide spiritual care and mental health resourcing in the underserved areas of Southwestern Pennsylvania, Southeastern Ohio, and West Virginia.

The Rev. Tyler Bayless, pastor at one of two host sites said, “There are only three faith-based counselors in the area to whom I can send congregants, and each has a waitlist of two to three weeks. Serving in an area that’s disproportionately affected by poverty, isolation, drug use, and other trauma, local pastors need better understanding and resources to serve those affected by mental illness.”

Offered over four weeks during the 2020-2021 academic year, Pittsburgh Seminary and the Pittsburgh Pastoral Institute will partner to present “Hope and Healing,” a three-part program serving Upper Ohio Valley and Washington presbyteries.

The sessions will address how to distinguish spiritual care from mental health, Mental Health First Aid training, and the availability of local mental health resources plus designing a church-based initiative to lessen the stigma and provide welcome to those with mental illness and their loved ones.

Dr. Helen Blier, director of continuing education at the Seminary, said, “We hope to use this program as a successful pilot for similar projects in other rural Western Pennsylvania presbyteries and to scaffold long-term strategies in these regions. In the end, we hope to empower pastors, create bridges between resources and region, and shift the culture concerning the stigma surrounding mental illness.”

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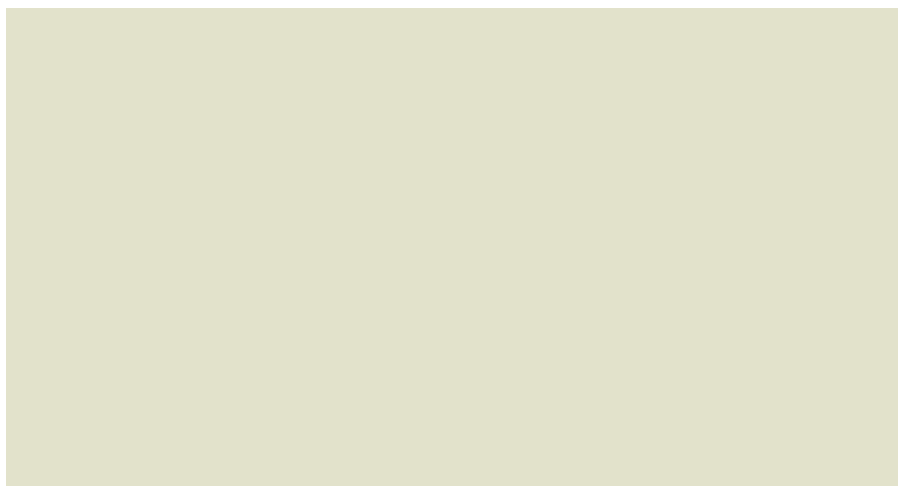
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