







#### April – June 2021

Issue 2 / Volume 41

L. Keith Weaver, Moderator

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#### ON THE COVER

Main photo: God's blessings and provision handed to every person who visits the Capital Christian Fellowship food pantry. Photo provided by Paris Rossiter.

Small photo: Concilio Iglesias Evangelicas Shalom (CIES, Shalom Council) helped LMC congregations in Cuba provide food aid to their community and church members.

**RSVP Today. Lunch is provided!** 

2160 Lincoln Highway E., Lancaster, Pa.

RSVP to Marcia by April 5 at mmylin@lmcchurches.org.



Classes are held at LMC offices

Learn more about STEP at: Imcchurches.org/ministries/step

# **Living and Learning Together**

### Bearing witness during this season of COVID-19 at Capital Christian Fellowship

BY PARIS ROSSITER

n Psalm 133:1–2, it says, "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down on the collar of his robe." Community provides one of the central values of our faith as Christians. Therefore, we need unity as a common thread in our life together. Although we are subject to this season's endless news cycles and social media arguments, which highlight division, strife, and unrest, Christ-followers bear witness to a better way with miracles in our midst.

As I reflect on the massive disruption caused by the arrival and spread of COVID-19, I consider it nothing short of miraculous that despite sickness on a historic scale, stay-at-home orders, crippling layoffs, travel bans, supply chain interruptions, and significant bouts of civil unrest, God's people continue to intentionally live and serve together in unity. We learned to do this in new, creative, innovative, socially responsible, and spiritually robust ways.

This way of living together requires a high level of prayer, input, investment, and unifying thought from all of God's children regardless of age, culture, national origin, socio-economic status, physical location, or factors that may in other ways separate us. We are experiencing a season that certainly challenges us, but also has the potential to bring a deep connection and sense of shared understanding among brothers and sisters of diverse populations. We are going through this together. Among the

many changes, there are two areas of our community





Packed food boxes ready for distribution.

In late March of 2020, the State of Maryland ordered, "No Maryland resident should be leaving their home unless it is for an essential job or for an essential reason, such as obtaining food or medicine, seeking urgent medical attention, or for other necessary purposes." This order affected every person in our entire state and was a shared experience among millions of people in our region. When several brothers and sisters in our faith community contracted COVID-19, the order took on personal significance. This alarming and tragic circumstance heightened the awareness of Capital Christian Fellowship and inspired our pastoral staff to take immediate action.

With input from the executive board and in consultation with leaders in the congregation, our leaders began to examine the ways we were connecting with each other and the services we offered. They felt the need to be intentional and specific about the services we offered from both a community and a

During the month of November 2020 with the pandemic in full throttle, the Food Pantry was open twice each week (100% increase) and served over 1,500 local families (900% increase) who are currently experiencing food insecurity.

regulatory perspective. The pastoral staff then instituted methods to draw us closer together during a time when we were required to stay physically apart. The food pantry was one place change tool place.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, our congregation operated a food pantry that was open one day a week. When started, the families who came to the food pantry shopped the shelves for themselves. Our partnership with the Capital Area Food Bank required our volunteers to travel to Washington DC to pick up food once every couple of weeks. The pantry served 125 to 150 families per month. We praise God for the connection the food pantry provided to our local families and to the birth of partnerships with community organizations.

During the month of November 2020 with the pandemic in full throttle, the Food Pantry was open twice each week (100% increase) and served over 1,500 local families (900% increase) who are currently experiencing food insecurity. The personal shopping stopped, and we created a drive-up system for food delivery. In addition, the Capital Area Food Bank be-

gan making deliveries directly to Capital Christian Fellowship. This essential service caught the attention of local elected officials who sometimes provide donations of hot meals to pantry guests during food pickup hours.

The families served by the pantry reflect the beautiful diversity of our surrounding community. Anyone who chooses gets an opportunity to serve during a time when it is most needed. Despite the requirement to use personal protection equipment, volunteerism significantly increased, including, those under 10 years old and those over 60. This multi-ethnic, multi-generational, dedicated group of people has been a weekly reflection of God's blessings and provision to every person who visits the pantry, and its expansion increases the reach of God's goodness and grace into households throughout our county.

The second focus, the digital landscape, also changed dramatically over the course of the last year. The use of non-physi-



Left: Volunteers working at the outdoor food pantry.

Below: A screenshot from the virtual Men's Meeting on Zoom.

An area many became nimble and adaptive was the realm of virtual meeting and instruction.

Nearly every demographic needed to learn how to adjust their personal environment to the use of virtual meeting, teaching and learning.

cal connection tools increased and new methods of communication emerged. This would be true if I was only referencing the Sunday morning worship service, but other areas changed as well. An area many became nimble and adaptive was the realm of virtual meeting and instruction. Nearly every demographic needed to learn how to adjust their personal environment to the use of virtual meeting, teaching and learning. All of us became both student and teacher in some capacity.

I'll never forget our congregation's first virtual Men's Meeting during the early days of the pandemic. The conversation was dominated by the common experiences of learning how to work virtually and how to adjust schedules to effectively support children and youth. The majority of the time was spent encouraging one another, laughing at shared feelings and experiences, and bonding over this struggle that we were all going through together. Whether it was online school or a virtual birthday party, we all had to do something we had never done before.

As the weeks and months stretched on, some of those Men's Meeting conversations shifted to how to maintain physical fitness while staying at home, how to deal with the emotional and relational strain of a job loss, and how to prepare to re-enter the workforce. The digital landscape played into each of these conversations, and the fact that God's people, the church, made such a drastic transition to engage in these life-changing conversations was a blessing and a miracle to many in our community. Virtual prayer nights, Zoom Bible studies, and Facebook Live game nights continue to connect people all over the world in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior.



The enemy who seeks to sow division among us today is working hard to keep us apart, frustrated, and angry with one another. He knows that a house divided against itself will fall. He knows that when we come together in a spirit of community, we will "reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13).

Yes, things have changed this year. A lot of things have changed. I pray that these changes allow us to adapt and see with new eyes and a renewed vision. I pray we will see the depth of unity that is possible when we embrace the diversity with which God has so richly blessed us. I pray we choose to seek God's face and God's will as we journey forward.

I venture to say that we, as a church body, have more shared experiences today than we did one year ago. We have learned so much together. Let us recognize and seize the opportunities in front of us. Let's not fall back into old divisions, and let's



continue to find ways to connect with one another in new, God-honoring, and spiritually fruitful ways.

Paris Rossiter and his wife Akeia and children worship at Capital Christian Fellowship in Lanham, MD.

# Viviendo y aprendiendo juntos

La comunidad proporciona un valor central en la fe cristiana. Al reflexionar sobre la disrupción masiva de COVID-19, es nada menos que milagroso que el pueblo de Dios continúe sirviendo intencionalmente juntos en unidad. De una manera espiritualmente sólida, esta temporada ha brinando el potencial para que los hermanos y hermanas de diversas poblaciones vivan de manera creativa, innovadora y socialmente responsable.

Antes de la pandemia, Capital Christian Fellowship operaba una despensa de alimentos que estaba abierta un día a la semana. Las familias que acudían a la despensa de alimentos compraron los estantes por sí mismos. La despensa servía de 125 a 150 familias por mes.

Con la propagación incontrolable de la pandemia, la despensa de alimentos se amplió a dos veces por semana. Las compras personales se detuvieron y creamos un sistema de servicio por vehículo para la entrega de alimentos que aumentó la capacidad en un 100% para las familias que experimentan inseguridad alimentaria.

El panorama digital también cambió drásticamente a lo largo del año pasado. Casi todos los grupos demográficos

aprendieron cómo ajustar su entorno personal al uso de reuniones virtuales para conversar, enseñar y aprender. Todos nos convertimos en estudiantes y profesores.

Nunca olvidaré la primera reunión virtual de hombres de nuestra congregación durante los primeros días de la pandemia. La conversación estuvo dominada por las nuevas, pero ahora comunes, experiencias de la escuela en línea, las reuniones de trabajo y las fiestas de cumpleaños virtuales. A medida que las semanas se convirtieron en meses, las conversaciones se centraron en mantener la buena forma física en casa, cómo lidiar con la tensión emocional y relacional de la pérdida de un trabajo y cómo prepararse para volver a ingresar a la fuerza laboral.

Mucho cambió en el último año. Oro para que estos cambios nos permitan adaptarnos y ver con nuevos ojos y una visión renovada. Oro para que veamos la profundidad de la unidad posible cuando abracemos la diversidad con la que Dios nos ha bendecido tan ricamente. Oro para que elijamos

buscar el rostro de Dios y la voluntad de Dios a medida que avanzamos.



'Living and Learning Together' Article Summary in French

# Vivre et apprendre ensemble

L'une des valeurs centrales de la foi chrétienne est celle de la communauté. En réfléchissant à la perturbation massive causée par la COVID-19, il semble miraculeux que les serviteurs de Dieu continuent intentionnellement leur œuvre en harmonie. Cette saison a permis à tous les frères et sœurs de diverses populations de vivre de manière créative, innovante et socialement responsable, et ce avec une certaine robust-esse spirituelle.

Avant la pandémie, la Capital Christian Fellowship exploitait une banque alimentaire ouverte une fois par semaine. Les familles qui venaient à cette banque alimentaire y faisaient leurs propres courses. Elle permettait de nourrir 125 à 150 familles par mois.

La propagation de la pandémie a conduit la banque alimentaire à doubler sa fréquence d'ouverture. Les achats individuels ont cessé et nous avons créé un système de distribution de nourriture qui a permis d'augmenter notre capacité de 100 % pour les familles en situation d'insécurité alimentaire

L'année passée a également vu une profonde modification du paysage numérique. La quasi totalité des catégories de population a appris à adapter son environnement personnel à l'usage de la visioconférence pour discuter, enseigner et apprendre. Nous sommes tous devenus à la fois étudiants et enseignants.

Je n'oublierai jamais la première réunion virtuelle des hommes de notre congrégation, au tout début de la pandémie. La conversation porta essentiellement sur ces expériences, à l'époque nouvelles mais désormais courantes ; cours ou réunions en ligne et fêtes d'anniversaire virtuelles. Au fur et à mesure que les semaines devenaient des mois, les sujet changèrent ; maintien de la forme physique à la maison, gestion de la tension émotionnelle et relationnelle lors d'une perte d'emploi, ou encore comment se préparer à réintégrer le marché du travail.

Tant de choses ont changé au cours l'année écoulée. Je prie pour que ces changements nous permettent de nous adapter et de poser sur le monde un regard nouveau. Je prie pour que nous puissions voir la profonde unité à laquelle nous destine la richesse de notre diversité. Je prie pour que nous choisissions de chercher le visage et la volonté de Dieu alors même que nous allons de l'avant.

# An Orange Well-squeezed

BY PLEDGE GWAMZHI WITH INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSION BY PARIS ROSSITER

Pledge and his family attend Capital Christian Fellowship after moving from Nigeria to the USA, now almost 10 years. He and his family are very active in the life of the congregation. His older sister is a worship leader. His older brother has served on the worship and production technical team. His parents teach classes, organize prayer initiatives, and share from the pulpit or in a small group. One could easily say that if Jesus calls them to it, they pour themselves into it.

COVID-19 generated many changes in the life of this family. One thing that has not changed is their commitment to continue pressing into the promises of God in their lives and in the lives of the people around them. These are promises that never change. They continue to pray, lead worship, volunteer, and lean into God's word. Pledge wrote this article to share his thoughts on the changes he experienced.

I thought life was perfect. Nothing bad can happen. Then COVID-19 came and took my house captive. It was April 15, 2020, my parent's 25th-anniversary. Due to pandemic restrictions, we were at home. Suddenly, my Dad began to have difficulty breathing. I called my mother and my sister, and they rushed over to help. My Mom called our neighbor, who is a doctor. She checked his oxygen level and found it



Pledge Ladep Gwamzhi, a 12-year-old seventh-grader from Lanham, Maryland is the youngest child in his family.

had dipped below the norm. My mother and sister then took him by car to the hospital. My mother came home without my father and did the only thing she knew to do; she prayed.



The Gwamzhi family from left to right: Faithful, Veronica, Pledge, Salvation and Ladep

We all prayed. Little did I know, what we thought would take seven hours has gone on for seven months.

After the first month, I was sure God wasn't listening to us, so I began to withdraw and seclude myself from others. I did not want to talk with others. I stopped praying. Over the next six months, both of my Mom's parents died, and my Dad remained in the hospital. One night, I remembered my father's words, "an orange well-squeezed produces good juice." So that night, I prayed. At this writing, my Dad is still in the hospital, but I know my pressing and my praying produces good juice. God bless you.

As a congregation, we continue to pray for restoration and healing for Ladep, and we do all that we can to hold his family close during this time of hardship. We welcome the prayers of those reading this article. Many things have changed during the past year, yet God's promises stay the same. In the Bible, God comforts His people over and over, saying things like "I will never leave you, nor forsake you (1 Chron 28:20; 1 Kings 8:57; Deut 31:6; Josh 1:5). Let us remember His word, be rooted in His promises, and be transformed daily by His unfailing love.

Una noche, recordé las palabras de mi padre, "una naranja bien exprimida da buen jugo". Así que esa noche recé. En el momento de escribir esto, mi papá todavía está en el hospital, pero sé que mi presión y mi oración producen un buen jugo. Dios lo bendiga.

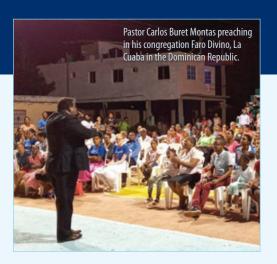
Un soir, je me suis souvenu des paroles de mon père, «une orange bien pressée produit du bon jus.» Alors ce soir-là, j'ai prié. Au moment d'écrire ces lignes, mon père est toujours à l'hôpital, mais je sais que mon pressage et ma prière produisent du bon jus. Que Dieu te bénisse.

# LMC'S MISSION FOR MANY LANGUAGES

## **Spanish Translation**

Un movimiento guiado por el Espíritu Santo para:

- Hacer discípulos de Jesús
- Movilizar a cada miembro como misionero, y
- ¡Multiplicar las comunidades de fe localmente y más allá!



#### **SPANISH SPEAKING CONGREGATIONS**

BY FELIXA VALLADARES DE KUNKLE

I realized some time ago that being able to speak Spanish is a great privilege, especially when the Latin American Spanish-speaking community is growing within the United States and especially within LMC. The language contains so much of the richness and fullness of the Spanish culture that it feels like being with family or at home when speaking. Spanish-speaking congregations provide this feeling when they open their doors to those who need family. Sharing our praises and meals in fraternal fellowship anoints and feeds hearts and spirits with the love of Christ. LMC represents Spanish-speaking congregations in the states of Florida, Pennsylvania, New York, Indiana to name a few, and in the countries of Mexico, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic and Cuba. The Spanish-speaking

churches will continue to grow, and they will continue to bless us with their joy and their very special way of praising and praying to the Lord Jesus Christ. That is why we like to say, "The Spanish language is a language of heaven."

#### THE SPANISH LANGUAGE

Spanish comes from a rough dialect of spoken Latin that came to what is today Spain and Portugal from the Roman Empire as early as 218 bce. This connection to Latin-speaking Romans classifies it as a Romance language. The language evolved there after the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the fifth century. Other languages, including Greek, Arabic, and native languages of the Americas contributed words to modern Spanish. Today, it is a global language with nearly 500 million native speakers, mainly in Spain and the Americas. It is one of the official languages of the United Nations. Alongside English and French, it is also one of the most taught foreign languages throughout the world.



Left: Retreat and Conference at Faro Divino in the Dominican Republic.

### A Spirit-led movement to:

- Make disciples of Jesus.
- Mobilize every member as a missionary.
- Multiply faith communities locally and abroad!

### **French Translation**

### Un movement conduit par l'esprit:

- pour faire des disciples de Jesus
- pour mobilizer chaque membre comme missionaire
- pour multiplier des communautés religieuses locales et au-delà!



#### FRENCH AFRICAN CONGREGATION

BY PASTOR JEAN BRUNO NZEY

At the Evangelical Center for Revival, people from seven French-speaking countries gather to worship together. They are Haiti, Congo-Brazaville, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ivory Coast, Chad, Cameroon, and the Central African Republic. When English speakers are present, we are equipped to provide translation. We are very vocal in our worship and praise of the Lord. We feel free to move, jump, and dance in the presence of God. Many of us use a variety of musical instruments. We regularly organize conventions, retreats and events. This discipleship allows us to discover new talents, encourage people to get involved in ministry, and give oneself to service for the kingdom of God.

#### THE FRENCH LANGUAGE

When the Romans conquered Gaul (modern day France, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland) in 2 BCE, the Gaulish language was slowly replaced by a crude verbal dialect of Latin. This new Romance language, which means "to speak in Roman fashion," replaced Gaulish as Latin conquerors and later Frankish immigrants mingled. Although the French may disagree, French is simply Latin badly mispronounced by Germans. More than 300 million people speak French today, and it is the official language in more than 25 countries. French and English are the two official languages of the Olympics. The unique pronunciation of French, which makes it harder to learn than Spanish, German and Italian, is due to some of the letters having different functions based on their position in a word or a sentence.



## FROM AROUND LMC: COVID-19 RELIEF

he financial impact on LMC congregations is very uneven. Many congregations lost income when members lost jobs or suffered reduced hours at work. In some cases, small business owners lost their business. Virtual school sometimes resulted in one parent remaining at home to provide child care and education support. The finances of two-income households then had reduced funds to work with. In all of this many congregations saw steep declines in congregational giving. The LMC Coronavirus Relief Aid Fund provided financial support to LMC applicants.

To date the LMC Coronavirus Relief Aid Fund distributed \$155,439 to 38 congregations and 99 different individuals in an effort to support mutual aid and care within LMC. Some of the recipients sent pictures and words of gratitude for the aid.



### **COMMUNITY FOOD AND COAT DISTRIBUTION**

Revive Faith, an LMC church start in Annapolis, Maryland, participated in



community food distribution and a coat giveaway with funds received from the Coronavirus Relief Fund

#### **HELP REPAIRING A WATER** TREATMENT SYSTEM

Norma Mennonite Church, Norma, NJ used some of the COVID funds they received to repair their water treat-



ment system in the church building. Many congregations affected by COVID lost offerings that provide for regular building maintenance.



#### ANNUAL BUDGET SUPPORT

Congregacion Menonita Shalom, New Columbia, PA received funds to help support its annual budget. Job losses and work-hour reductions in the congregation radically impacted church support. In generosity, they forwarded a part of the funds to a church member in Central America experiencing great loss from the hurricanes. This family sheltered on their roof for 4 days during the floods.



#### **HELPING CHURCHES IN CUBA**

Concilio Iglesias Evangelicas Shalom (CIES, Shalom Council), New Holland, PA, received funds to help LMC congregations in Cuba provide food aid to their community and church members.



# IN MEXICO

Concilio Iglesias Evangelicas Shalom (CIES, Shalom Council), New Holland, PA, received

funds to help LMC congregations in Mexico provide aid to their community and church members.

## **NEWS NOTES**

#### CREDENTIAL ACTIVITY

The following men and women were licensed, ordained, or installed in recent months.

**Stephen Jaynes** (Aileen) was licensed toward ordination as lead pastor at Bossler Mennonite Church in Elizabethtown, Pa.

**Steve Sauder** (Becky) was licensed for specific ministry as pastor of care and visitation at Mercersburg Mennonite Church in Mercersburg, Pa.

Mike Shank (Cherina) was ordained as lead pastor at Cedar Street Mennonite Church in Chambersburg, Pa.

Evan Horst (Kim) was licensed for specific ministry as youth pastor at Metzler Mennonite Church in Ephrata, Pa.

Charles Lauver (Linda), was installed as lead pastor at Cedar Lane Chapel in East Earl, Pa.

Joel Harnly (Corinna) was licensed toward ordination at Community Church of Manheim in Manheim, Pa.

Ryan Bomgardner (Gail) was installed as lead pastor at Metzler Mennonite Church in Ephrata, Pa.

Alphaus Stoltzfus (Kim) was ordained as pastor of discipleship and outreach at Weaverland Anabaptist Faith Community in East Earl, Pa.

**Joseph Lab** (Kate) was ordained as lead pastor at Hershey Mennonite Church in Kinzers, Pa.

Richard Nolt (Julia) was licensed toward ordination as pastor of administration at Erisman Mennonite Church in Manheim, Pa.

#### SHALOM NEWS CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Peter Cook, currently Pastor at Alive Church Ephrata, is preparing to serve as a part-time contributing editor for Shalom News. He will work alongside Sherri Martin to create each issue of the magazine. Peter earned a B.A. in Liberal Arts with double minors in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages



and Bible and Religion from Eastern Mennonite University. Peter is fluent in Spanish. He also graduated from the LMC STEP program.

#### AFRICAN-AMERICAN INTERCULTURAL **LEADERSHIP TEAM**

In January, the Conference Executive Council took action to recognize the African-American Intercultural Leadership Team led by Bishop Alvin C. Motley as a formal ministry within LMC.



Currently, this team has formed an intercultural prayer team, is administering the Intercultural Development Inventory to bishops and staff, writing a grant to the LMC Legacy Foundation, and preparing to place a person on LMC staff sometime in 2021.

#### SPRING LEADERSHIP ASSEMBLY

Camp Hebron will host the Spring Leadership Assembly on April 30. The event will focus on pastoral care and nurture. Most pastors found 2020 a very difficult year. This event is designed to serve their personal and spiritual needs as LMC leaders. Eldon Fry, retired Messiah University faculty, prior Campus Pastor, and currently serving as a spiritual director, will lead the event. The assembly will be a hybrid event: in-person and virtual, to allow for those connecting from a distance and with pandemic concerns.

#### **CELEBRATION OF CHURCH LIFE 2022**

Celebration of Church Life (CCL) 2022 will be held at Camp Hebron, June 9–11. The three-day event will not be free. Costs will be published soon. Watch for details on the LMC website. With this event, CCL will begin a process gathering in different locations around the east every third year with the intervening two years held in the Lancaster, PA area. With 2022, CCL will be a hybrid in-person and virtual event.

#### **EDUCATION GRANTS**

The LMC Education Grants Committee awarded \$7,400 to 11 students. The next grant cycle closes July 15. To apply for an education grant visit Imcchurches.org/consolidated-application-for-lmc-education-grants/.

# **UPCOMING EVENTS**

Complete calendar and more details available at LMCchurches.org.

#### **Monday Night Prayer Gathering**

Every first Monday of each month 7:00–8:00 p.m. via Zoom

LMC office, Lancaster, Pa. 717-293-5246

#### **Women's Prayer Gathering**

Every first Friday of each month 8:00-9:00 a.m.

LMC office, Lancaster, Pa. 717-293-5246

#### **STEP Open House**

April 10 and May 8 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

(Lunch Provided) LMC Office, Lancaster, Pa. RSVP by April 5 to Marcia Mylin at mmlyin@lmcchurches.org

### **Newly Credentialed Orientation**

April 14, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Zoom Meeting from LMC Office 717-293-5246

# Thursday Night Quarterly Prayer Meeting

April 15, 7:00–8:30 p.m. *Tentative* 

Harvest Room, Landis Homes, Lititz, Pa. 717-293-5246

# LMC Spring Leadership Assembly April 30, 2021

Camp Hebron, PA
On location and virtual

#### LMC Children & Youth Ministry Leaders

## Every 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month 7:00–8:00 p.m., virtual meeting

Studying the book: Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership by Ruth Haley Barton Contact Marcia at mmylin@Imcchurches. org for the zoom link.

### LMC Fall Leadership Assembly

September 25, 2021

Location: TBD

#### **Celebration of Church Life 2022**

June 10–12, 2022

Camp Hebron, PA, On location and virtual









#### Cross cultures this summer Sign up for a Kingdom Team in one of three locations



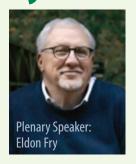
### Open to everyone

#### LMC SPRING LEADERSHIP ASSEMBLY

# **Soul Care for you!**

Friday, April 30, 2021 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Camp Hebron, PA

Join us for a refreshing one-day event that will include: Soul-Care Seminars, Spiritual Direction, and Worship. A virtual Zoom option is available.



Register at Imcchurches.org/leadership-assembly-resourcing/

