

## *William Penn's Legacy: Does the Holy Experiment Continue?*

### **An Abundance of Sacred Places**

**Trinity Center for Urban Life  
2212 Spruce Street  
Philadelphia, PA**

**Thursday, November 10, 2011  
7:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m.**

### **Religious Pluralism and Tolerance**

**Camp Curtin Memorial Mitchell  
United Methodist Church  
2221 N. 6th Street  
Harrisburg, PA**

**Thursday, November 17, 2011  
7:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m.**

These lectures are organized and supported by



Pennsylvania  
Historical & Museum  
Commission



Federal-State Partner  
National Endowment for the Humanities

**P**ennsylvania is a national leader in religious diversity and expression. In the spirit of this rich history, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) adopted William Penn's Legacy: Religious and Spiritual Diversity as its annual theme for 2011. This theme allows PHMC and its many partners to examine the founder's ideals in an effort to appreciate their influence on many traditions that shape our thinking and values in the twenty-first century.



Church of the Assumption (above and right), 1131 Spring Garden Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

William Penn's views on religious tolerance, freedom from established religion, sacred space, and social justice were atypical in the seventeenth century Western world, and they were contested almost from the founding of Pennsylvania, which he called his "holy experiment." Implementation of his unprecedented concepts, especially by and amidst a diverse population, led to much

discussion and debate about how to define them. Not everyone agreed, and Penn's aspirations were not always realized. It is this rich, contested, and unfinished heritage that PHMC invites our heritage partners to explore with us.

With support from the Pennsylvania Humanities Council, PHMC is pleased to invite you to two lectures centering around a pivotal question, *Does the Holy Experiment Continue?*

The inaugural program, "An Abundance of Sacred Places," is scheduled for Thursday, November 10, from 7 to 9 p.m., at the Trinity Center for Urban Life in Philadelphia.

On Thursday, November 17, from 7 to 9 p.m., "Religious Pluralism and Tolerance" will be presented at Camp Curtin Memorial Mitchell United Methodist Church in Harrisburg.

**While both programs are free and open to the public, we ask that you confirm your attendance by telephoning PHMC's Bureau for Historic Preservation at (717) 783-9933 or by emailing [cgarrett@pa.gov](mailto:cgarrett@pa.gov). You are welcome to attend either or both lectures.**



Philadelphia's Church of the Assumption, built 1848–1849, is the oldest surviving church designed by Patrick Charles Kelly (1816–1896), the most prolific architect of nineteenth-century North America. Its twin spires, towering fifteen stories, are visible across much of North Philadelphia. John Neumann helped consecrate the church and Katharine Drexel was baptized there. Both became Catholic saints. The church is endangered by possible demolition.



**WILLIAM PENN'S LEGACY**  
*Religious and Spiritual Diversity*

## An Abundance of Sacred Places



Trinity Center for Urban Life • 2212 Spruce Street • Philadelphia, Pa.  
Thursday • November 10, 2011 • 7:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m.

**F**rom Native American sites to twenty-first-century mega churches, Pennsylvanians have inherited an abundance of sacred spaces. Churches, synagogues, mosques,

temples, and cemeteries stand as architectural landmarks in our towns and cities, but their survival is not always assured. Many of these buildings house congregations that struggle to afford the upkeep. Changing needs have made other structures redundant. Some of these have been converted for secular purposes or became historic sites, but the least fortunate sit empty and untended. What is the community's proper role in the stewardship of these sacred and formerly sacred spaces?

### PROGRAM

#### Welcome

Jean Cutler, Director, Bureau for Historic Preservation, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

#### Program Overview and Introductions

Randall Miller, Ph.D., Professor of History, Saint Joseph's University

#### An Abundance of Sacred Places

Bob Jaeger, President, Partners for Sacred Places

Partners for Sacred Places (Partners) helps congregations and their leadership to expand the view of their role so that their sacred place remains a rich and vital part of the social fabric of a community. Partners helps congregations leverage existing and new resources, solidify their continued relevance, and ensure their own sustainability. Programs and services offered by Partners value and respect the spirituality and faith of all congregations that open their doors to the community. This work is being enhanced by Partners' new study on the Economic Halo Effect of Sacred Places, which is demonstrating the larger impact that religious properties have on the health and vitality of their neighborhoods.

### The Stewardship of Historic Religious Properties

Philip E. Scott, Associate Principal/Senior Architect, KSK

Sensitivity to historic issues is important in developing design solutions to assure that existing church buildings can be adapted to meet changing needs, including liturgical functions, administration and educational/community services. KSK works closely with congregations and parishes on best stewardship practices for their historic religious structures, in particular understanding the physical causes and consequences of structural decline and making careful consideration of changes to sacred space.

### Discussion of Issues and Concerns with the Audience—Q & A

Presenters and Audience

### Refreshments

This reception will provide participants with an opportunity to further discuss ideas, issues and concerns with presenters and each other.

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## Religious Pluralism and Tolerance



Camp Curtin Memorial Mitchell United Methodist Church • 2221 N. 6th Street • Harrisburg, Pa. Thursday • November 17, 2011 • 7:00p.m.–9:00 p.m.

**P**enn's Colony was open to a great variety of religious groups. Friends, Mennonites, Moravians, Presbyterians Lutherans, Anglicans, Catholics, Methodists, Jews, Muslims

and more could all be found in pre-Revolutionary Pennsylvania. Later waves of immigration added—and continue to add—even greater variety. While, according to modern standards, the extent of toleration was limited at first and the ideals of toleration were not always honored, the hope and expectation of mutual respect among religious groups remains Penn's legacy. The speakers will discuss religious pluralism and tolerance and their limits in Pennsylvania's history and will explore such issues in view of the more recent growth of Asian and Middle Eastern religious communities in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

### PROGRAM

#### Welcome

Barbara Franco, Director, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

#### Program Overview and Introductions

Randall Miller, Ph.D., Professor of History, Saint Joseph's University

#### Setting the Stage: William Penn and His Holy Experiment

John Fea, Ph.D., Professor of American History and Chair, History Department, Messiah College

In Pennsylvania, as his new province was called, Penn was determined to create not just a refuge for Quakers, but a "holy experiment," where religious freedom would be the cornerstone of the new social order. Although Penn's royal charter had made him the governor as well as proprietor of his colony, rather than install himself as a feudal lord, he helped write and then agreed to a Frame of Government

that allowed for freedom of conscience in religious matters and recognized the separation of church and state.

### Testing Penn's Vision: Denominational Diversity and Social Tension in Pennsylvania History

Dennis Downey, Ph.D., Professor of History and Director, University Honors Program, Millersville University

Pennsylvania was from its inception a multicultural society, shaped by successive waves of newcomers and their relationships with established populations. The resulting cultural and religious diversity created opportunities for mutual progress and heightened social conflict. Ethnic, racial and religious differences reinforced "otherness" that tested the limits of William Penn's vision of tolerance in ways that reverberate to this day.

### Does the Holy Experiment Continue?

Emma Lapsansky-Werner, Ph.D., Emeritus Professor of History and Curator of the Quaker Collection at Haverford College

According to an article in the *Wall Street Journal*, a Gallup report released in August 2011 revealed interesting information about religion in America. Over the last generation, Americans have built a society in which inter-religious friendships and marriages have become the norm. Empirical data make clear the consequences of this religious bridge-building: feeling warmly toward a given religion follows from having a close relationship with someone of that faith. Nevertheless, past performance doesn't guarantee future results. To help create a stable and moral society, is it important that Americans find a way to assure that the Holy Experiment Continues?

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