

UNITED CHURCHES' NEWS

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UNITED CHURCHES OF LYCOMING COUNTY

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A BOLD NEW FUTURE

The New Normal? Our world has changed and is still changing as we move to put our lives back together. It is the time to imagine a bold new future for all of us.

In Lycoming County alone, there are now 168 cases, and 23 deaths reported from COVID-19. Fortunately we are now able to be in the green phase with many congregations and businesses beginning to open as long as we can comply with the social distancing requirements and can congregate in groups of less than 250. For congregations there are many resources to help you know what to do. One such resource was recently provided by UPMC Susquehanna and emailed to everyone on our email list. Should you not have received it contact me, Gwen, at director@uclc.org or call me at 570-419-1464.

In the midst of such tribulation, we cling to the words of Psalm 46:1, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (NRSV).

This pandemic shines a light on our ability to pull together as a united people in a time of crisis. We are rejoicing for:

- all who provide aid and comfort to the ill and suffering.
- the experts working to improve testing, find a vaccine, and develop guidelines as we begin returning to normal life.
- the countless individuals who continue to come to the aid of their neighbors.

- educators, civic officials, religious leaders, and business leaders who continue learning new ways to adapt to the constant changes in our lives.



This pandemic also shines a light on the hierarchy of human life. Many essential workers are at the bottom of the economic ladder. We need to commend their consistent work and support measures to safeguard their well-being and elevate their economic and social status.

We must also name the injustices and challenges that we confront including...

- Stopping hate speech and hate crimes and work to end racism. People throughout the country have coalesced amid shock and horror after the senseless brutality that has lead to death of George Floyd too many others, to call for an end to racism and prejudice throughout our country.
- Advocate for and uplift the most vulnerable among us, including individuals, businesses, and organizations.
- Stopping the shifting of blame, because we must all be part of the solution.

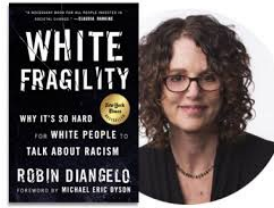
Now is a time to imagine a bold new future that considers the best interests of all of God's people. Please join us in re-imagining a way forward and collaborating to build a new future that integrates justice and peace with health and well-being for our community, nation, and world.

WORKING FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE

Read White Fragility with us:

We know that racism invades every part of our society - even us, so Rev. Lenore Hosier, chair of our United Churches Ecumenism and Education Committee would like to invite you to join us in reading the following book. "White Fragility" by Robin Diangelo. Robin wrote this book to help us all better understand why it is so hard for white people to talk about racism, and to help us find a place to begin this necessary conversation. A number of you have already started the book, and a discussion of the book will be held via ZOOM over the lunch hour (noon - 1 p.m.) The schedule is as follows.

Session 1: Tuesday, June 23 Intro-Chapter 3
 Session 2: Tuesday July 7 Chapter 4-8
 Session 3: Tuesday July 21 Chapter 9-12



Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Lenore Hosier. This book is out of stock in many bookstores right now due to a large demand, but is available on Kindle and can be read with the free Kindle App. Contact Lenore at lhosier@susumc.org to receive the ZOOM link if you haven't already done so.

Solidarity: There are many opportunities to be in solidarity with all those who have been mistreated, brutalized, and cast aside by the sins of racism and prejudices. In the sermon this Sunday, Rev. Brad Walmer reminded our congregation, "We are called to go to those who are troubled, helpless, or hopeless, and to share the love of God with them, to speak words of hope and encouragement to heal their wounded hearts, to resurrect their dreams, to cry alongside them, to listen to their concerns, and to comfort them in their grief."

Many emails go out from United Churches to share opportunities with you as we know about them. (If you don't get those emails contact Gwen at director@uclc.org.) For example, our community has also had several candlelight vigils - the first one a virtual vigil at home on porches on May 31 at 9 p.m. and the second on June 14 from 6:30 - 8:30 in downtown Williamsport.

Another way to show solidarity is with several banners that have been designed by Lynn Estomin, Professor of Art Emerita, Lycoming College. They are a visible way to show care and concern as we work toward justice and reducing and eliminating racism. She designed these for a neighbor saw the Black Lives Matter banner that a student had designed in 2014. Here are the banners.



If a congregation or individual would like either banner, they are 4' x 3' printed on indoor/outdoor vinyl and if 2 or more (can be different banners) are ordered at the same time, the cost is \$27 including shipping. For additional information or to order contact Lynn at estomin@lycoming.edu.

Emanuel Nine Day of Commemoration and Repentance: June 17 marks the fifth anniversary of the shooting at Mother Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, S.C., where nine people were killed during a Bible study. There will be a Prayer Service available online at 12 p.m. Eastern time on June 17. It can be viewed online at www.ELCA.org/EmanuelNine.

Participants from various denominations will remind us all of the continued need for repentance from racism and for deepening conversation with individuals, congregations and denominations as we move toward reconciliation and repentance on matters of racism and white supremacy. They will remember the Rev. Clementa C. Pinckney, Cynthia Marie Graham Hurd, Susie Jackson, Ethel Lee Lance, Depayne Middleton-Doctor, Tywanza Sanders, the Rev. Daniel L. Simmons, Sharonda Coleman-Singleton and Myra Thompson.

The Poor People's Campaign has gone digital: Poor & low-income people will lift up their voices at a digital assembly on June 20th. People from more than 40 states suffering from poverty, COVID-19 & police brutality will tell their stories & demand moral agenda. The assembly and march will be aired at 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Eastern on Saturday, June 20, and at 6 p.m. Eastern on Sunday, June 21. It can be viewed at www.June2020.org, and on many local and national media.

The campaign notes that the day's focus will be on poor and low-income people who demand that their voices be heard. Among the impacted people who will speak are service workers from the Midwest who have worked through the pandemic without PPE; families hurt by police brutality; a coal miner from Appalachia; mothers who have lost children due to lack of health care, residents of Cancer Alley in Louisiana, and an Apache elder who is petitioning the federal government to stop a corporation from destroying a sacred site in Arizona.

The assembly and march are being held in the wake of protests spurred by the death of George Floyd, who died on Memorial Day as a Minneapolis police officer held his knee on Mr. Floyd's neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds. His cry of "I can't breathe" echoed that of Eric Garner, who died in 2014 when a New York City police officer put him in a chokehold. It followed those of Breonna Taylor, who was shot eight times by officers who invaded her apartment in Kentucky with a battering ram, and Ahmaud Arbery, who was killed by two white joggers who weren't charged until a video emerged.

The campaign's leaders decided at the end of March to hold a digital assembly and march because of the pandemic rather than gathering in person in Washington, D.C. Amidst protests that are happening in every state, this digital mass assembly presents an opportunity for all Americans to join together in a united call for justice from wherever they are.

SHEPHERD OF THE STREETS*

J. Morris Smith, Th.D.,
570-322-6538
shepherd@uclc.org



Retirement Announced: J. Morris Smith, long time Shepherd of the Streets, has submitted notification of his pending retirement effective at the end of the summer. Dr. Smith became the fourth Shepherd January 1, 2000.

The program, which began 4/1/88, has produced many miracles as those who come in feeling stressed and hopeless find a listening ear and help with their concerns. New programs have been implemented over the years as needs and talents change, and always we find many who come to faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ through spiritual counseling they find through our doors.

Rev. Gwen Bernstine, Executive Director of United Churches, said that the program will continue to operate under new leadership. This ministry meets the personal, emotional and spiritual needs of homeless, hungry, unemployed and troubled individuals in Lycoming County. She noted that while the primary goal of the Shepherd of the Streets program has not changed, the overarching focus of the program at this time is to help people with health concerns.

In acknowledging Dr. Smith's resignation, the United Churches' and Shepherd of the Streets' Executive Committee noted the tremendous impact he, as the Shepherd, has had on the needs of the population in crisis in our county. Morris has served the program extremely well for twenty years! His dedication to the underserved of Williamsport merited him the Sr. Vincent Humanitarian Award, the YWCA Racial Justice Award, and the Pickelner Brotherhood Citation.

With Barby, his wife of 62 years, he will be moving to Kansas City, MO in August to be close to family and enjoy a well earned retirement.

Ms. Yvonne Shenuski, President of the Shepherd of the Streets' Advisory Committee gratefully acknowledges Dr. Smith's work and ministry to the needy. The Shepherd Program has generated generous support from both organizations and individuals in our county. Through the Shepherd Program, we try to meet needs that are not being addressed in other areas of the community. The Shepherd ministry helps people in need purchase medicine, medical equipment, and make it to out of town medical appointments. Some of us take these things for granted, and others look at them like someone is asking us to climb the tallest mountain.

Mrs. Phyllis Girven, President of United Churches said, "The United Churches thanks all those who support the Shepherd of the Streets' Ministry. We look forward to continuing

to work with residents and organizations throughout Lycoming County as we continue to address the needs of our county. We have always appreciated Dr. Smith's willingness to work in the community, serving on the MH-MR Joinder Board of Lycoming-Clinton Counties, the FEMA-HAP Advisory Board, and as a past president of the Lycoming Co. Health Improvement Coalition.

God has indeed called us to provide pastoral care and spiritual guidance to those whose spiritual needs are not met by our churches, especially seniors and those who are hungry, homeless, unemployed and unemployable. For information about this part-time position as Shepherd of the Streets contact Gwen at director@uclc.org or 570-419-1464.

Please join United Churches in sincere prayer and cooperation that this special ministry will continue to contribute to the deepening and advancement of God's kingdom of Love and Service in our community."

During the pandemic, the SOS office has been open from nine to noon, Monday - Thursday to make available the purchase of medicine, medical equipment, and gasoline for out-of-town medical appointments. Social distancing and masking has been effective. We will continue with this reduced schedule through the yellow and green phases of mitigation until life becomes more secure for everyone and we need to be open more hours a day.

Our need for funding has increased because of the extra expenses imposed on us all. Please let this report be a note of appeal for financial assistance. The need remains for hygiene items, diapers, and paper goods. We are indeed thankful for those who have contributed throughout the first phase of the quarantine. The mailing address is Shepherd of the Streets, P.O. Box 2184, Williamsport, PA 17703. Our location is 320 Park Ave., across from Goodwill. And we are currently open Monday - Thursday, 9 am - noon.

Pray for us and all care takers and first responders who are in harm's way while providing mental, physical, social, and spiritual healing. May God bless you and keep you as you begin to revive some form of normalcy.

These family sized hygiene items are always a blessing especially and extra important in the summer! This continues to be a necessary part of our ministry. The list follows:

- Toothpaste and Toothbrushes*
- Shaving Cream and Razors*
- Shampoo and Conditioner*
- Women's Hygiene Products*
- Towels and Wash Cloths*
- Bedding and Blankets*



- Tissues and Toilet Paper and Paper Towels*
- Soap* *Deodorant* *Combs*
- Baby Diapers* *Baby Shampoo* *Baby Oil*
- Baby Q-Tips* *Baby Wipes* *Baby Powder*

FOOD PANTRY *

Mona Rudio, Coordinator 570-322-1657

Email - foodpantry@ucl.org

POVERTY: A FAITH-BASED RESPONSE

Christian Social Concerns Committee

If someone who has worldly means sees a brother or sister in need and refuses compassion, how can the love of God remain in them? (1 John 3:17). We are surrounded locally, nationally, and globally by need. May we continue to exhibit God’s love by responding to the need of so many.

Thanks for those responding – Many are providing food and other ways of assisting the many individuals and families who are profoundly affected by the economic conditions caused by the pandemic. The staff and volunteers of food pantries, schools, and other relief organizations are doing their utmost to help. The challenge will be to sustain the aid. Those who are able are called upon to share their time, talent, and treasure.

Gloomy prediction on how much poverty could rise – Researchers suggest the poverty rate may reach the highest levels in half a century, hitting African-Americans and children hardest. (Source: Columbia University School of Social Work and [The New York Times](#))

Pandemic’s impact is global – The United Nations World Food Program estimates that 265 million people in low and middle-income countries could face starvation by the end of 2020 due to the pandemic.

Poverty was already a reality for many local children – The following are the rates of poverty per local school districts for children ages 5-17 for 2018. The total number of public school children living in poverty in Lycoming County in 2018 was 2,839. (Source: PA Department of Education) These numbers will certainly be dramatically higher for the near future.



We all need to have food available to keep striving through these tough times. In what ways do you go about cooking and keeping your family nourished during such times of uncertainty. Once you have answered the question, think of your neighbors throughout our community who may not have the means to do the same. These days, sadly, it seems to be many of us. So look to God and our Savior for ways to help! Love and compassion are most needed these days. Helping those we don’t come face to face with is a way to express love.

Even when our church buildings are still closed - or beginning to open in the green phase - there are many ways to contribute food. You can arrange for someone to pick up food donations up at your door, or you could drop off them off at our door or at your church during the week. Checks sent to United Churches for us to buy food are also welcome and helpful! We are able to do more shopping for food and can also purchase gift cards to provide so folks can get the things they need. So please think of how you and the congregation can continue helping your neighbors.

During this pandemic/hardship we all at times question why. Use this time to draw closer to God, your refuge in times of trouble, and strengthened in your faith continue to show love to your neighbors. Having many new clients coming for food due to lose of jobs we are in need of all items listed below:

- | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Cereal</i> | <i>Oatmeal</i> | <i>Variety Noodles</i> |
| <i>Soups</i> | <i>Dressings</i> | <i>Ramen Noodles</i> |
| <i>Olives</i> | <i>Pop Tarts</i> | <i>Canned Veggies</i> |
| <i>Ketchup</i> | <i>Pickles</i> | <i>Mayonnaise</i> |
| <i>Mustard</i> | <i>Snacks</i> | <i>Canned Meats</i> |
| <i>Jellies/Jams</i> | <i>Canned Fruit</i> | <i>Tomato Sauce</i> |
| <i>Peanut Butter</i> | <i>Canned Stews</i> | <i>Mac-n-Cheese</i> |
| <i>Juices</i> | <i>Microwave Dishes</i> | |

School District	Students Living in Poverty	Percentage Of All Students
East Lycoming	190	11.65%
Jersey Shore	403	13.29%
Loyalsock	159	10.68%
Montgomery	181	17.42%
Muncy	214	10.34%
South Williamsport	234	16.64%
Williamsport	1,344	23.52%

Thanks so much to all our faithful donors! We are encouraged by you and Our Lord to strive in making our pantry a safe haven, with masks and distancing for now, but as always a happy environment in our community! Our hours and process have changed with the pandemic, but hours will become more normal soon in the green phase. If any questions about it feel free to call. We are located at the rear of 320 Park Ave. Williamsport and the hours are: We are operating during this time, modified for safety! Days and Time:

Monday 9-11 for donations/stocking/deliveries
Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:15 – 12pm (2)

Donations should be sent to United Churches, 202 East Third Street, Williamsport PA 17701. Memo: Food Pantry.

Have a Wonderful and Blessed Summer!!

DIAL - A - DEVOTION *

Have you called yet today?
The number is 570-322-5762.
It's available 24/7.



Devotions are three minutes or less, change daily, and are designed to lift your spirits and help you to have "A Closer Walk with God" even when we have to practice social distancing! The devotionalists this spring are:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 6/14-21 Pastor Tammeay Aichner | 6/22-28 Ms. Yvonne Shenuski |
| 6/29-7/5 Deacon Sandy Grier | 7/6-12 Pastors Jim & Kathy Behrens |
| 7/13-19 Rev Gwen Bernstine | 7/20-26 Ms. Tiffany Haller |
| 7/27-8/3 Rev. Danesta Whaley | 8/3-9 Rev. Georgianna Welsch |
| 8/10-16 Ms. Patty Gohrs | 8/17-23 Rev. Ron Shellhamer |
| 8/24-30 Ms. Pat Jenkins | 8/31-9/6 Pastors Jim & Kathy Behrens |
| 9/17-20 Ms Yvonne Shenuski | 9/21-27 Ms. Tiffany Haller |

Listen today and tell others about this ministry!



Tammeay Aichner, Coordinator, ucm@uclc.org

Our semester for UCM has come to an end. Our plan was to have an end of year picnic and invite all of our pastors back to celebrate. With the campus closed, we needed to change that plan and so we had a final Monday night without a pastor to speak. One of our graduating students offered to lead the Zoom meeting. He had gone on a mission trip to a closed country over spring break, just as everything was shutting down around the world. After sharing some of his impressions and personal insight, he left us with some questions to consider over the summer that came out of that trip. I would like to leave them with you.

- What temple are we building in our life? Do we make it look beautiful on the outside, while it remains devoid of meaning on the inside?
- Are we showing true hospitality? Are we willing to set aside our plans for the plans God has for us, even if that means an inconvenience in our life?
- What are we worrying about that we need to give to God?

Ephesians 5:14-17, Matthew 22:37-40, and Proverbs 3:5.

Congratulations to our seniors...Ethan Cummings and Holly Wilson!



United Churches 75th Anniversary is 2021! We are planning a spectacular year. Keep us in prayer and watch for news. All congregations will be part of this celebration! Let's stay safe and healthy so it can be a fantastic year!

COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES

The New Normal for most of us is expecting the unexpected and constantly dealing with change! I want to take this opportunity to catch you up on things you may have missed, and let you know important changes.

In March when things began to change the first thing that was different was that I had a lot of information to convey to all of you. Almost every day I was over my email limit with Gmail and they would suspend my service for 24 hours. That's why in the middle of all these changes, in mid April, you started getting emails from me using Mailchimp. And I am using the director@uclc.org email just because they kept shutting down my gmail. Sometimes you have to look for these emails - they don't always land in the same inbox you are used to. Here is what has gone out via mailchimp email since then.

- 4/13-20 - Virtual Ecumenical Lunch
- 4/23 - Scam Email Alert
- 4/29 - April Newsletter (only sent via email)
- 5/11 - May Update
- 5/28 - Pastors Update
- 5/30 - Virtual Candlelight Vigil
- 6/1 - Human Trafficking Seminar & Info. If you missed it our podcast is available at www.uclc.org/podcasts
- 6/4 - Racism Awareness & Book Study
- 6/5 - Getting Back To Worship Resource (UPMC)
- 6/12 - Candlelight Vigil
- 6/16 - June Newsletter (email & snail mail)

All this goes to say, Mailchimp allows us to send smaller sets of information out more quickly. But we can only get information out to you if we have your email address (did you change it and not tell us?) Not everyone has email, and we will continue sending the print newsletter throughout the school year - but there are always special things and unprecedented times. Please get us your email address today at director@uclc.org.

ECUMENICAL LUNCH WAS STILL THE PLACE TO CONNECT WEDNESDAYS

Thanks all who joined for a virtual lunches on Wednesdays for great programs this spring! You brought your lunch to your computer, tablet or phone and enjoy the fellowship and speaker. We missed three weeks during Lent then reconnected via Zoom in Holy Week. Special thanks to UPMC Chaplain John Charnock, Brian Patchett (North Central Sight Services), Carol Waltz and Leatha Kieser (Musicians), Rev. Ken Elkin (who took us to Israel), Bob Schweppensheiser (bullying and child abuse really does happen), Fr. Bill Corcoran (the Catholic Church and Interfaith relationships), Brian McClintock (COVID-19 and Little League), and Gwen Bernstine (Rev. Bob Edgar: American Legend)



We are not sure what the fall will bring but look forward to beginning the season on September 9th one way or the other.

POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS DUE TO CONCERNS ABOUT COVID-19...



United Churches Annual Golf Tournament planned for this fall has been canceled for 2020. Concerns about the impact of the coronavirus to the health and the economy of our community led the planning committee to make

this decision. The new date is Friday, September 24, 2021 when we will celebrate both our tenth tournament and the 75th anniversary of United Churches. We look forward to your being part of that special tournament!

National Night Out has been changed from August to October 6th. It is a time when safety in the community is stressed. It is a great time for churches to plan something which includes the neighbors around them. It can lead to forming a permanent Community Awareness group to keep in touch with each other and to keep the neighborhood safe.

Getting to know your neighbors and keeping your area safe is the main purpose of National Night Out, but it is important to keep it going all year long. We can all start planning for National Night Out, and saying a few prayers while we are at it, that we don't have a resurgence of COVID-19 that makes us have to shelter at home again.

Christian Mental Health Support Group News: The Williamsport Area Christian Mental Health Support Groups are returning to face to face meetings effective immediately. The schedule and location are:

- The West End Christian Community Center (WECCC) located at the corner of Diamond and West Third Streets the first and third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m.
- Sojourner Truth Ministries located at the corner of Center and High Streets the second and fourth Thursday of each month at 12:30 p.m.



These support groups are a space for Christ centered support, safety and healing for those in our community who experience mental health or emotional difficulties, either themselves or in their families. It is not mental health therapy but a ministry in which members seek to support each other during their time of need and to grow spiritually in their relationship with God. Call 607-432-4926 if you have questions.

NAMI Of North Central Pennsylvania support groups are also gradually restart as we recover from a nearly two months of mandatory restrictions due to the pandemic. June's meeting was virtual via Zoom and the Lycoming County meeting announcement will be on their Facebook page www.Facebook.com/NAMINorthCentralPA. You'll find info there to bolster your spirit and learn things too.

CLASSIFIEDS

Chaplain Wanted at UPMC Susquehanna Williamsport. They are actively seeking a Part-Time Chaplain who will provide pastoral care in routine and emergent situations, lead scheduled worship and participate in multi-discipline team meetings. As an employee at UPMC Susquehanna Williamsport you will find great company culture and a rewarding career path with room for growth. Apply today at www.careers.upmc.com. Want to learn more? Contact Jennifer Klein, Recruiter at kleinj2@upmc.edu or 412-402-0146.



AREA MINISTRIES

Sojourner Truth Ministries: Greetings in the name of the Lord! During the pandemic, although the building has been closed to the public, we have not only continued but have increased serving nutritious meals Mon - Sat. Our counts have increased to over 100 some days. During April, we served 1,930 lunches! When we reopen, we'll be offering a structured time prior to lunches being served, along with social service assistance.



There are multiple service opportunities to get involved with! Here are a few: mentors, lunch hosts (Mon-Sat being scheduled) life-skill workshop leaders (can be one time or a few), handiwork around the buildings and property, dishwashing (11-1, Mon-Fri- pick day(s)), film-maker for a video short.,

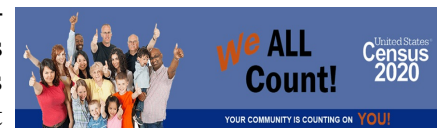
Tangible needs: jelly, sandwich bags, thank you notecards, postage stamps, (4) reusable spray bottles for disinfecting tables between guests, powdered drink mix (NO RED), takeout containers, adult coloring books colored pencils and sharpeners, a food processor, clear acrylic water pitchers. (Clean pet free, smoke free) area rugs size 8x10 or 5x7.

www.stmwilliamsport.org, 570-323-1797.

Email: Angelique4stm@gmail.com.

~ Rev. C. Angelique Labadie-Cihanowycz

It's Important To Take Part In The 2020 Census! The census happens once every ten years throughout the nation. The census is mandated by the US Constitution and is the primary method for equitably allocating resources across the country. For every person that's left out, that's twenty thousand dollars that our county misses out on! That's huge! Funding comes to us for schools, libraries, roads, housing, senior services, healthcare, transportation, community development, law enforcement, employment. If you are not counted we all loose.



May Was Older Americans Month The Pennsylvania Department of Aging and the Pennsylvania Council on Aging (PCoA) released the findings of their statewide survey assessing the status, needs and interests of older adults during the COVID-19 outbreak. The survey inquired about food access, public risk factors, and social connection. The brief online survey, conducted during the first week of April drew more than 3,700 responses from older adults across Pennsylvania. Some major findings are:

- Older adults, on average, are going out almost twice weekly to get groceries.
- Older adults are going to the pharmacy at high numbers, even though almost all pharmacies have offered delivery and drive-through options for shopping and prescription-filling.
- Adults aged 85 and older reported that senior centers were the third source they relied on for their community connection. The first two were family and religious institutions.
- Almost 6% of the “oldest” older adults (91 years and older) reported that they still attended religious events.
- Fewer than 20% of the “oldest” older adults have access to smartphones, but more than 20% stated that they were interested in virtual connections



Prevent Elder Abuse Act: As the number of individuals with Alzheimer’s or other dementia continues to grow, so does the potential for exploitation, neglect and physical or emotional abuse. Now is the time to contact our representatives in the House of Representatives and in the Senate to urge them to protect these vulnerable populations.

People living with dementia often have difficulty understanding or explaining situations. In some cases this can make their behaviors appear as uncooperative, disruptive or combative to law enforcement, medical personnel and other first responders. Persons living with dementia may also have difficulty assisting investigators or prosecutors due to their cognitive impairment. These situations may be exacerbated during crisis situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, professionals and staff throughout health care, social services, and criminal justice systems receive little or no training in the unique needs of individuals living with dementia.

You and your congregation are in a unique position of routinely checking in with the people in your congregational family and your neighborhoods. It is important to be alert, watching for signs of abuse and to pick up on unspoken needs.

Then, in order to help, we need better laws. Ask your members of Congress to co-sponsor the Prevent Elder Abuse Act (H.R.6813/S.3703). This new legislation would require the Department of Justice to develop materials designed to assist law enforcement officers, prosecutors, judges, medical personnel, victims services personnel, etc., who encounter and support individuals living with Alzheimer’s and related dementias.

You can improving the quality of interactions between

professionals who interact with individuals living with Alzheimer’s and other dementias would help to protect those individuals from elder abuse.

Nursing Homes: I know that the members of our community that are residing in long term care facilities are constantly on our hearts and minds, and in our prayers. It is amazing how the wonderful staff of those facilities are keeping everyone safe, happy and connected with family during this time when it isn’t safe to allow visitors.

We especially keep all connected with the Manor Care Jersey Shore facility in our prayers. Imagine ... it was probably just one person who was COVID-19+ but still asymptomatic, who brought the virus into the building, perhaps while bringing something special in to a grandparent or parent. It is just that easy to bring about a huge disaster!

Our long term care facilities have been tuning in to our devotion line messages daily and many also have been able to watch local worship services that are available online. However as congregations stop doing online worship, we will be looking at some ways to have a service available for them online. Please contact Gwen with ideas or to volunteer at director@uclc.org or 570-419-1464.

Time To Mourn: A beautiful ecumenical Memorial Service was done recently to honor and remember the tens of thousands who have died from COVID-19. The service included prayers, scripture readings in multiple languages, a moment of silence, inspirational music and a sermonic reflection. I was blessed to watch it.

We all have been mourning things we have lost and people we have lost during this time for reasons other than the coronavirus. This service was organized by the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA and many of the national leaders of the 38 member communions took part in the service via many internet technologies, and it was streamed live on Memorial day. It is currently available for you to view at www.nationalcouncilofchurches.us.

Prayer for Brandon Park: Many have been concerned with the Neo-Nazi National Socialist Movement (NSM) asking for a permit to rally in Brandon Park. The city has decided not to open the public parks to large gatherings so they have denied the permit. Pat Bole is inviting our community to fill the park with prayer especially around the date they were planning to come. The special days for us all to pray are July 16 - 17 - 19. Individuals and small groups of 15 or less are invited to come and pray throughout the park, or you can pray from your home or worship space. Pat has designed a prayer guide Gwen will be happy to email to anyone who would like it. Contact the UCLC office at director@uclc.org.

CREATION CORNER*Christian Social Concerns Committee***TIME FOR NATURE**

The foods we eat, the air we breathe, the water we drink, all come from nature. We are more reliant on nature's services than most can ever imagine. Yet these are exceptional times in which nature is telling us to wake up and take notice.

As we take time to imagine a bold new future and the best interests of all God's people it is a perfect time to reimagine our relationship with nature.

Have you seen?.....

- The United States Postal Service (USPS) issued an "Earth Day Forever" first-class postage stamp.



- The "official site" of www.EarthDay.org had "Climate Action" as its theme with digital conversation events (due to the global pandemic restrictions on public gatherings). Go online now to see how Earth Day went digital and then take an Earth Day Challenges and find out how you and your congregation can take action today.
- A "Green Good Housekeeping Seal" of approval is issued by the Good Housekeeping magazine's Institute as an emblem of sustainability for products that have met a wide range of environmental criteria. www.ghseal.com. This will not be news to long-time readers of GH.

Pandemic Resources

- The Beautiful Cure: The Revolution in Immunology and What It Means for Your Health. Daniel M. Davis.
- The Coming Plague: Newly Emerging Diseases in a World Out of Balance. Laurie Garrett.
- Deadliest Enemy: Our War Against Killer Germs. Michael Osterholm.
- Epidemics: The Impact of Germs and Their Power Over Humanity. Joshua S. Loomis
- Epidemics and Society: From the Black Death to the Present. Frank M. Snowden.
- The Great Influenza: The Epic Story of the Deadliest Plague in History (1918). John M. Barry.
- Influenza and Public Health: Learning from Past Pandemics. Edited by Jennifer Gunn, Tamara Giles-Vernick and Susan Craddock.
- The Rules of Contagion: Why Things Spread and Why They Stop.. Adam Kucharski.

REDUCE - REUSE - RECYCLE ...

These are good words to remember at home, church, school and play!

Reduce... the amount of garbage from your family:

- Buy fewer disposable items
- Avoid buying over packaged items.
- Reuse and Recycle!!

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

Circle the amount of time it takes for the garbage to decompose...

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| 1. Cardboard Milk Carton |  | A. 1 month
B. 1 year
C. 5 years |
| 2. Banana Peel |  | A. 1 week
B. 2 months
C. 5 years |
| 3. Leather Baseball Glove |  | A. 1 year
B. 10 years
C. 40 years |
| 4. Aluminum Soda Cans |  | A. 10 years
B. 350 years
C. 1,000 years |
| 5. Toothbrush |  | A. 1 month
B. 25 years
C. 400 years |
| 6. Car Tire |  | A. 10 years
B. 500 years
C. maybe never |
| 7. Plastic Sandwich Bags |  | A. 400 years
B. 1,000 years
C. maybe never |
| 8. Wooden Baseball Bat |  | A. 5 years
B. 20 years
C. 100 years |
| 9. Glass Bottle |  | A. 50 years
B. 500 years
C. maybe never |
| 10. Foam Cup |  | A. 6 months
B. 40 years
C. maybe never |

Answers: 1-c, 2-b, 3-c, 4-b, 5-c, 6-c, 7-a, 8-b, 9-c, 10-c