



# UNITED CHURCHES' NEWS

Published Monthly by the  
**UNITED CHURCHES OF LYCOMING COUNTY**  
202 East Third Street, Williamsport PA 17701  
Phone: 570-322-1110, E-Mail: [director@uclc.org](mailto:director@uclc.org)  
Rev. Gwen N. Bernstine, Executive Director and Editor  
Mrs. Patty Gohrs, Administrative Asst.: [office@uclc.org](mailto:office@uclc.org)  
Office Hours: 9-3 Monday - Thursday

*Issued mid-monthly, September through May with special e-mail only summer issues.. Items marked with an asterisk may be of special interest to your congregation. Deadline to submit articles - First of each month.*

VOLUME XXXI NUMBER 4

APRIL 8, 2014

*Please notify us if you change your e-mail address*

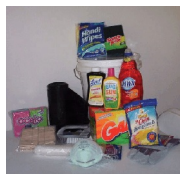
**Thank You** for receiving our Newsletter via E-Mail. It is a wonderful donation of postage, office supplies and volunteer time.  
Please send it on to others who can make use of the information.

## CWS BLANKET AND KIT COLLECTION - In A New Place!! \*

**K**its and Blankets are a vitally important part of Disaster Relief Work that happens around the world, sometimes right next door, and other times on the other side of the world.

The new and good used blankets and the kits you have been getting ready will be received during May at our United Churches Office, in New Covenant United Church of Christ, 202 E 3<sup>rd</sup> St. Wmspt. Use the center door. Our office is open Monday - Thursday from 9 - 3. To double check our availability or to make other arrangements call 570-322-1110. If possible, please box all like kits together so they are ready for shipment.

Offerings for transportation to a disaster site is \$2 per Blanket, School, Baby and Health Kits and \$3 for Emergency Clean-up Buckets. They can be delivered with the kits or sent to our office, with "CWS transportation" in the memo.



Your assembling of the kits is only the first step in getting them where they can help so much. The kits are taken

to Harrisburg where they are then transported to the Church World Service (CWS) Center in New Windsor Maryland where they are sorted and packed for shipment anywhere in the world. The money you donate assures that they reach disaster destinations when needed.

With so many storms devastating communities, and refugees fleeing from horrible situations, all these things are in short supply, and your help is deeply appreciated.

**M**ay Newsletter will be the last print until September. There will probably be at least one summer e-mail/online edition.

The deadline for items for this edition is Thursday, May 8. It will be mailed May 13. Please remember to send in....

Vacation Bible School Information

Summer Block Parties

Gatherings and events to which you'd like to invite the ecumenical community.

You can e-mail it to us at [director@uclc.org](mailto:director@uclc.org) or mail it in to 202 East Third Street, Williamsport, PA 17701.

Visit us at the following web site - [www.uclc.org](http://www.uclc.org)



March 12&13 / 30-HOUR FUNDRAISING EVENT

**W**e are excited to be part of First Community Foundation Partnership of Pennsylvania's Raise the Region 2014, an event.

*Thank You* for helping us and over 200 non-profits with our fund raising efforts. Over all, \$1,002,223.38 was raised in our region thanks to your generosity. We benefitted from sixteen donors who gave \$1,725, and with matching funds from Blaize Alexander and winning \$1,000 in the drawing by Larson Design Group our total this year was 2,832.42.

#### WEDNESDAY NOON ECUMENICAL LUNCHES\*

**J**oin us Wednesdays for lunch and a program. The lunch line opens about 11:45 a.m. You're assured of a tasty \$6 lunch, warm ecumenical fellowship and a thoughtful program designed to enrich your life mentally, physically, spiritually and socially. Parking is free in the lot north of the church from 11 to 1:30. No reservations are needed but irregular attenders should call 570-322-1110 to help our caterer know how to prepare. Both laity and clergy are welcome!



#### APRIL:

- 9- **Mr. Jim Moff**, Area Businessman, *"Swimming Lake Champlain: An Inspiration for All of Us"*
- 16- **Rev. Gwen Bernstine**, United Churches of Lycoming County, *"What Jesus Saw Those Last Days"*
- 23- **Ms. Missy Black**, Lycoming County SPCA, *"Cats and Kittens make Wonderful Friends"*
- 30- **Mrs. Candy Watkins** and **Mrs. Carol Waltz**, Area Musicians, *"Love Songs?"*

#### MAY:

- 7- **Mrs. Bonita Mahoney**, Manager, Rider Park, *"The Treasures of this Forest Sanctuary"*
- 14- **Ms. Jean Cleveland**, Master Gardner Trainee, *"Container Gardening for Limited Outside Spaces"*
- 21- **Rev. Larry K. Waltz**, Retired American Baptist Pastor, *"Birding VS Bird-Watching: Spiritual Moments"*
- 28- **Dr. Charles Getchell**, Area Musician, *"Ring and Sing Some Old Favorites, Sacred and Secular"*

Make plans to join us and bring a friend!



**Tammey Aichner, Coordinator**

Contact at: 570-419-5376 or [ucm@uclc.org](mailto:ucm@uclc.org).

**T**hank you to everyone that made our soup sale a success! We sold 83 quarts!!! We only have a few quarts left, if anyone is interested; 1 chili, 1 spinach tortellini, 2 chicken and cheese ravioli and 4 chicken corn soup. The success of this sale gives us a great start to our 2014-2015 events, which include a Fall Retreat and 2 mission trips!

On March 29th, we participated in the Open House on campus. We represented the Religious Life table from 9-3 where we handed out church directories to the incoming freshman and their families.

It is hard to believe that the last month of Faith Talks is upon us. Thank you to Marvin Hurwitz for teaching the students about a Seder and Seder plate. Captain Debbie Engel from the Salvation Army and Jim Foran from St. Joseph the Worker spent time with the students this month in study.

We will be fellowshipping at the end of the month by having a bowling/pizza party. We hope to be able to come together over the summer to work on a church build in Harrisburg. The harsh winter has delayed the groundbreaking, but we are hopeful that we will still be able to participate as a group while on break.

#### DATES TO REMEMBER:

- United Churches Sunday: Sunday, June 15
- United Churches Golf Tournament - Friday, September 26
- CROP Walk - Sunday, October 12
- United Churches Annual Assembly-Tuesday, November 18

#### DIAL - A - DEVOTION \*

Have you called yet?

The number is 570-322-5762.

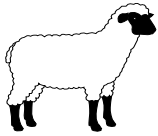
It's available 24 hours a day.



**D**evotions are three minutes or less, change weekdays and once on the weekend, and are designed to lift your spirits and help you to have "A Closer Walk with God." The devotionalists include:

- 4/7-13 Fr. Dan Kovalak
- 4/14-20 Mrs. Pat Jenkins
- 4/21-27 Pastor Dianna Harrod
- 4/28-5/4 Pastors Kathy/Jim Behrens
- 5/5-11 Mrs. Patty Gohrs
- 5/12-18 Mrs. Dorothy Wagner

Listen today and tell others about this ministry!



## SHEPHERD OF THE STREETS\*

**J. Morris Smith, Th.D.,**  
*Contact at: 570-322-6538*

### HOPE, A MOST DYNAMIC GIFT

Ringing throughout Lent is probably the most “famous” verse in the Bible, especially to those who are motivated by evangelization... “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life”. It is a verse that glorifies God for His love for the human who is so easily distracted from what is going on in the world, to God’s love for it. What motivated God’s love was the state of the world and the central theme of the verse is that God gives hope to what He loves by giving an unmerited gift that saves and preserves. It took the sinless to take the rap for the sinner, so that sin could really be defeated and a new and living way be possible. That, my dear brothers and sisters, is hope.

People who come to the Shepherd of the Streets ministry, more often than not, are putting their hope in the hopeless. That in the avalanche of needs and the costs that go with them, payment of a past-due utility bill, or payment for a medicine whose need they were not counting on, will somehow keep their head above the economic whirlpool they cannot escape. Most often than not, their situation is hopeless and this little bit of financial or physical help hardly makes a ripple. The economy and the government assistance (and lack of it) does not throw them a lifebuoy in the swirl of such a vortex.

The truth is, government assistance keeps the poor in the vortex. The truth is, such assistance is designed to keep the poor in the vortex. It is hopelessness that has no exit, and has raised generations that must be content to live in such hopelessness.

So we, like those who crucified Christ, do not expect the poor to have hope. And the poor have quit looking to us to provide the hope that comes from God’s love, a salvation that is more than just providing the next meal. Apathy is the opposite of love...in apathy there is no room for hope. The Gospel calls us to hope, and the great commission is not a lost cause. How do we, the people of God, provide hope? By seeing Jesus in the face of the poor, in the one who is sick, in all who are caught up in the unjust structures that government imposes, in all those who are panicked and fearful because they cannot provide for their children.

When we really take it seriously that Jesus really meant what He said (called belief), and gave us the power to implement what He said (called the way of truth and life), gave us to share in His faith, hope, and love (called the Holy Spirit), then and only then will the body of Christ make an impact on poverty. To see Jesus hungry and feed Him, to see Jesus thirsty and give Him drink, to see Jesus a stranger, and invite Him in, to see Jesus naked and clothe Him, to see Jesus sick and comfort Him, to see Jesus in prison and visit Him, to see Jesus drowning in the whirlpool of materialism and

economic despair, is to risk throwing the lifebuoy of hope and gives Him a greater and truer vision of what life is all about.

When Pope Francis visited a homeless shelter in May of ’13, he said: “To love God and neighbor is not something abstract, but profoundly concrete: it means seeing in every person the face of the Lord to be served, to serve Him concretely. And you are, friends, the face of Jesus.”

Let us look within, especially during our Lenten journey, and examine the purpose of the love of God. Let us face our own lack of self-denial, and carry the cross of hope to poor. Jesus said: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul.”

---

**Speakers from Susquehanna Health Home Care and Hospice:** They can assist with educational programming for your organization. The following list of topics are among those that are available.

Skilled Nursing Services	Therapy Services
Telehealth	Infusion
Palliative Care	Bridge Program
End of Life Care Services	

Maternal Child/Nurse Family Partnership

Call them today to request a program on a specific topic or to design your own program tailored to your needs. Call Michele Brague, Director of Operations, at 570-320-7690.

**Children’s and Infant Clothing** is needed at Daniel’s Closet, the free clothing ministry for children and adults at Redeemer Lutheran Church, 1101 Washington Blvd., Wmspt. Donations of clean seasonal clothing will be accepted on Thursday, April 24, 5-6 pm. Please use Washington Blvd. stairwell.

**FOOD PANTRY \***

Gail Burkhardt, Coordinator 570-322-1657,  
E-mail - [foodpantry@uclc.org](mailto:foodpantry@uclc.org)

**W**e live in such a generous area! Our shelves are full of donations from the Cub Scouts at St. Luke Lutheran Church the Montoursville Cub Scouts, and Faith United Methodist Church with their Feed the Five Thousand Collection! They fly off the shelf most days almost as fast as the volunteers put them up, but it is good to have food to restock! Some of these donations will see us through the summer when needs are high with children home from school, and donations are usually down.



I can not say enough about our faithful volunteers, either. Each one works hard and enjoys being at the pantry on your behalf, reaching out to each consumer, in Jesus' name. In case you haven't realized it, this is Gwen writing this column. Gail is now home, but recently spent a little over a week in the hospital with pneumonia. And the volunteers do their jobs, and fill in for Gail, visit, call, and keep things running smoothly! Please keep Gail in prayer as she continues to recover, and our pantry community.

Here at the Castellano Center, 320 Park Avenue, Williamsport, the hours for clients are Tuesdays and Thursdays 10-3. Food delivery is Mondays 9:30-Noon. Items we need to fill shelves:

<i>canned veggies</i>	<i>canned fruit</i>
<i>tea bags</i>	<i>pasta (all shapes)</i>
<i>spaghetti sauce</i>	<i>tuna</i>
<i>pop tarts</i>	<i>cereal</i>
<i>hamburger helpers</i>	<i>saltine crackers</i>
<i>small (1#) boxes of sugar</i>	<i>chunky soups</i>

Everyone at our Pantry thanks God for the many ways you bless us as we help folks fill their bags every day, and see the appreciation on their faces. They know they will now be able to keep their families fed during these difficult times. Be blessed and have a wonderful Easter Season.

**S**oil and Water Stewardship Week, April 27-May 4, 2014. Theme: "Dig Deeper: Mysteries of the Soil". Educational materials and stewardship insert/litany available. Visit <http://www.nacdnet.org/education/resources/digdeeper> or call 1-888-695-2433.

**A**rbor Day, celebrated annually the last Friday of April, inspires people to plant, nurture and celebrate trees. <http://www.arborday.org>.

**GOT CHURCH NEWS ?**

**L**ooking for more ways to promote your church events? Email information to [News@uclc.org](mailto:News@uclc.org) for possible inclusion in United Churches' ongoing event promotion. Include What / Where / When / web site / Facebook / Who For / Cost & details. Our broadcasting department will develop them for use in producing one minute weekly Public Service Announcements (PSA) for area radio stations, postings on Facebook, Twitter, Connect Williamsport, etc. Kathy and Lou Kolb who chair that department hope this effort will result in some more people attending area church events. Regardless, it would show the public that there are active churches inviting them to events.

**U**nited Churches  
**4<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Tournament\***  
Ken Weiss at 570-321-9555 or  
E-mail: [kweiss1213@gmail.com](mailto:kweiss1213@gmail.com)



Save the date: Friday Sept. 26

Spring is here and our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Tournament is on its way. United Churches needs everyone's cooperation to make this the best year ever. If every church cooperating under the United Churches ministry umbrella would help in one or more of these ways ...

then indeed this year's tournament would be amazing.

Our first three years have been nothing short of amazing as well with us raising over \$7,000 the first year, \$8,000 the second year and over \$9,000 the third year. However, nothing is impossible with God's Spirit behind us and we KNOW we can raise well over \$10,000 this year. But we can't do it without YOU!

Raffle prizes are also being collected. You do NOT need to be present to win so help us support United Churches and at the same time, maybe you can win a gift certificate to Golfsmith.com or beautiful paintings, or.. Well our list of prizes is just beginning.

The bottom line is this - Do you believe in the various ministries of United Churches? If so, won't you help us to continue these ministries? Contact the United Churches office or Ken Weiss at [kweiss1213@gmail.com](mailto:kweiss1213@gmail.com) or 570-321-9555 for more information. We may have to cut the number of golfers off at 120 so even though it is a few months away, it would be a good idea to let us know you're coming so we can hold a spot for you and/or your foursome.



**POVERTY - A FAITH-BASED RESPONSE\***  
*from our Christian Social Concerns Committee*

**I** am the resurrection and the life. -John 11:25 What do these words mean to us? How do they challenge and empower us to provide both charity and justice for those experiencing hunger and poverty?

**Lycoming County Unemployment Rate** for January 2014:

The preliminary unemployment rate for the county for December 2013 was 7.5 %. This figure was higher than the December rate of 6.7%.

**Family Promise** – Good News: The City of Williamsport approved the use of the former rectory for Mater Dolorosa as the new Day Center for Family Promise. The Day Center is now conveniently located near Shepherd of the Streets and the United Churches Food Pantry which are or soon will be located in the former Mater Dolorosa Parish Center.

**Low Wage Workers** – Comparing Present with the Past:

Low-wage earners in 2013 tended to be older as a group than they were in 1979. They were also more likely to have high school or college educations, and more likely to be racial and ethnic minorities. The greatest increase was in the 35-64 age bracket. Those with more than a high school diploma also experienced a greater increase when compared with the past.

**About Hunger:** Nearly 1.5 billion people in developing countries live in extreme poverty, living on less than \$1.25 a day. Every day, almost 16,000 children die from hunger-related causes. In the United States, 14.5 percent of households struggle to put food on the table. More than one in four American children are at risk of hunger. More than one in five children live in households that struggle to put food on the table.

**Global Hunger:** Worldwide, the number of hungry people has dropped significantly over the past two decades, but 842 million people continue to struggle with hunger every day. 1.2 billion people still live in extreme poverty — on less than \$1.25 per day. Each year, 2.6 million children die as a result of hunger-related causes.

**U.S. Hunger:** We live in the world's wealthiest nation. Yet 14.5 percent of U.S. households—nearly 49 million Americans, including 15.9 million children—struggle to put food on the table. In the United States, hunger is not caused by a scarcity of food, but rather the continued prevalence of poverty. Both issues must be addressed in our continued efforts to help those Jesus called "the least of these" (Matthew 25:45).

**Inspired by the Resurrection:** As we celebrate the Resur-

rection, we must renew our support for local programs that provide food, shelter, and other services to those experiencing hunger and poverty in our communities. We must raise our prophet voices to call upon elected officials at the state and national levels to increase support for nutritional programs and enact legislation that ensures all a living wage.

**Church Women United - May Friendship Day**

Friday, May 2, 2014

Pine Street United Methodist Church  
 441 Pine Street, Williamsport

Lunch: Noon, Program beginning at 1:15 p.m.

Theme: "Through God Our Hands Can Serve"

Luncheon Cost - \$8 per person



The thread that weaves Church Women United through 2014 is constructed from Isaiah 49:15-16. The Lord answers, "Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should not have compassion on the child of her womb? Yes, they may forget, yet I will not forget you. Behold I have indelibly imprinted you on the palm of each of My hands; (O Zion) your walls are continually before Me." We invite you to join us for this luncheon and program, as together we are reminded that we are in God's hands and we are God's hands. A key woman will be honored at this program. Our ingathering for the day is nonperishable food for the United Churches Food Pantry.

Luncheon reservations must be received by April 24 and must be prepaid. They should be sent to Diane Casella, 407 Allen Street, Montoursville, PA 17754. Checks should be made payable to Church Women United.

**Tanzanian Partnership/Mission Trip:** Susquehanna Health Hospice staff have begun to build a partnership with the Shirati Hospital Hospice and Palliative Care Team. A trip by local staff to Tanzania, is planned to exchange information in late July 2014. Dr. Nesbitt is leading the team with staff nurses and social workers to learn together ways to improve patient care.

Speakers are available to share their hopes and exchange information with local congregations by contacting Susquehanna Health Hospice team member Allison Brion, MSW at [abrion@susquehannahealth.org](mailto:abrion@susquehannahealth.org) or Cathie Haefner, RN at [cehaefner949@msn.com](mailto:cehaefner949@msn.com). Gifts for this project can be made by sending funds to Rachel Seagraves at Susquehanna Home Care and hospice, 1100 Grampian Blvd, Williamsport PA 17701 with checks made out to Susquehanna Home Care and Hospice and placing "FSSA" in the memo line. Please keep the team in prayer as they prepare for safe travel, arrival and return.

**CREATION CORNER***from our Christian Social Concerns Committee***Ten Commandments.....****of Environmental Responsibility**

-by Rev. Dr. Alvin Pitcher (1913-1996)

1. Thou shalt begin each day with thinking about, praying with and for the universe. Use a globe as a symbol for the universe or a picture of the heavens with galaxies.
2. Remember that 40,000 kids under five die every day from hunger and hunger-related diseases.
3. Thou shalt save energy. Cut your energy use at least 20% during the next 12 months.
  - a. walk, bicycle, carpool, reduce the number of your shopping trips
  - b. replace incandescent bulbs, mostly with fluorescent
  - c. insulate
  - d. buy a car that gets 50 miles per gallon
4. Thou shalt recycle!
5. Thou shalt listen to what God is saying to us through the scientists' descriptions of what is happening to the earth.
6. Thou shalt choose to use less – less gasoline, less fuel for heat, less hot water, less meat, less food grown with chemicals (fertilizers and pesticides), less paper, give less material goods and more of self, buy fewer clothes, less purchased recreation, less traveling, less housing, less purchased entertainment, purchase fewer books, less purchased jewelry, less alcohol.
7. Thou shalt be part of a group focused on caring for creation – a task force in your congregation, a group of students and faculty at your school, a group living on your block or in your apartment building. This will include political activity.
8. Thou shalt write people, especially your friends, send literature, subscribe to magazines for them and other people.
9. Thou shalt expose yourself to the world of nature – to forest, mountains, rivers, lakes, marshes, to garbage dumps, feed lots, agricultural processes.
10. Thou shalt be open to accepting the ecological crisis as a gift – as an opportunity for new experiences, new ways of being with and for each other.

Alvin Pitcher was a longtime civil rights activist in Chicago, and retired as a divinity professor from the University of Chicago. In 1994 Pilgrim Press published his *Listen to the Crying of the Earth: Creating Creation Communities*. In 1965 he received the Edwin T. Dahlberg Peace Prize from the American Baptist Convention.

**It'S all about StewardShip Saving\$**

Workshop

Thursday, May 29, 2014

at New Covenant United Church of Christ

202 East Third Street, Williamsport

Workshop from 3-4:30 pm or 6:30 - 8 pm

4:30 pm: Tour New Covenant UCC and see some

Energy efficient modification and ask questions in detail

5:45-6:15 pm: Light Supper.

Register at: [director@uclc.org](mailto:director@uclc.org) or 570-322-1110.

**M**ay is generally one of the few months of the year when we don't dread opening our utility bills, but that's not the usual state in most homes or houses of worship – and it's the rare house of worship (or home) that can't do better.

Join PA Interfaith Power & Light leaders to learn about common places to cut your congregation's energy use, how to get an audit for your building, and how to engage congregants in the process. We'll tap into the wisdom in the room, introduce you to places to find inspiration and pointers online, and talk about measuring progress for sharing, goal setting, and recognition, and participants in both sessions will be able to take part in the tour of New Covenant with the building manager to see some of their recent changes, and ask all your detailed questions.

You've heard of Energy Star for your home appliances, but did you know that there is an Energy Star program for congregations that goes well beyond appliance labeling? Here's your chance to learn more! It's a program for tracking progress and improvements, and their new interface (rolled out in 2013) is easy to use. It's FREE, and more powerful than any spreadsheet you might already have. Energy Star has the power to do things like correct for heating and cooling days so that you can make useful year-to-year and January-to-January comparisons. You can compare your house of worship's energy use to the average for your area, and, if you choose to share data for a little friendly competition – or for viewing ministerium-wide achievement – you can. Energy Star has its own recognition program for congregations, and some national "greening" programs use it to measure and recognize energy efficiency progress, too.

Already have a spreadsheet, and want to start a little smaller? The Interfaith Power & Light Cool Congregation Contest and the Cool Congregations recognition program allows you to take on a different area of focus each year and collect handsome plaques to show your varied achievements like scouts collect badges.

Come to the 3:00-4:30 workshop and then tour New Covenant with the building manager, or tour first, stay for a light supper, and stay for the 6:30-8:00 workshop.

**HOLY WEEK EVENTS IN OUR AREA**

**W**illiamsport Civic Chorus will hold a Concert on Palm Sunday, April 13th, 2014 at 3:00 PM at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 142 Market St, Wmspt. They will perform the "*Mass in B Minor*", by *J.S. Bach*. Tickets will be available at the door.

**P**assover Dinner with Seder Inspired Menu at Le Jeune Chef on Monday, April 14 at 6 pm in Le Jeune Chef. The cost is \$17 for the public. Ticket are on sale at the Busch Campus Center Information Desk.

**T**he Passion of Christ: St. Joseph the Worker Parish Youth Ministry is sponsoring a showing of "The Passion of the Christ", directed by Mel Gibson on April 13<sup>th</sup> (Passion Sunday) at 3 pm at the Community Arts Center, 220 W. 4<sup>th</sup> St., Wmspt. The cost is \$5.

**L**iving Stations of the Cross: at St. Joseph the Worker Parish Church, 702 W 4<sup>th</sup> St, Wmspt, on Passion Sunday, April 13<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm and Good Friday, April 18<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 pm by their Youth Ministry

**E**cumenical Good Friday Services will be held throughout our area:

Noon- 3:00 pm

**St. Marks Lutheran Church**, 142 Market Street, Williamsport, by the Williamsport City Ministerium.  
Theme: Personalities Around the Cross



**Heshbon Park United Methodist Church**, 2898 Heshbon Road, Wmspt. by the Hepburn Lycoming Ministerium.  
Theme: The Seven Last Words of Christ.

1:00 pm

**Muncy Baptist Church**, 9 West Penn Street, Muncy, Speaker, Rev. Robert Dunkleberger, hosted by the Muncy Ministerium.

**L**ight Your Way to A Cure this year with the American Cancer Society by remembering or honoring a loved one by purchasing a **LUMINARIA CANDLE**. These votive candles, nestled in sandbags and lit for a soft effect, are being sold now through May 16<sup>th</sup>. On that date at 9 p.m. the candles will be lit in a special ceremony during the Relay for Life, at the Wmspt. High School Football Stadium. To donate a luminaria, send your name, address, phone number(s), the person(s) you are honoring and/or remembering, the number of candles requested, and your donation. Make check payable to the American Cancer Society and mail or drop it off at the American Cancer Society, % Lynn Robinson, 1948 E 3<sup>rd</sup> St., Wmspt PA 17701.

**EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN OUR AREA**

**G**limpses of God: The Williamsport Sun-Gazette will be publishing a series titled, "Glimpses of God?" in their Religion section on a monthly basis. Written by correspondent Nancy E. Baumgartner, they'll feature stories of people who believe they've experienced miracles, or glimpsed God in their lives. Have you, or someone you know had such an experience? Submit a short account to [religion@sungazette.com](mailto:religion@sungazette.com). Include your phone number, full name and email address. They'll contact you for details. Even if you don't have a personal story to tell, spread the word that this series will be running in Sun-Gazette for as long as there are stories of this sort to tell.

**F**ourth Fridays are another fun Friday in our County. Retirees gather at 12 noon at Montoursville Presbyterian Church for a **RETIREES LUNCHEON**, great fellowship. There is no charge, but a donation basket is available. All retirees are welcome. The church, at 900 Elm St, Montoursville, is handicapped accessible.

**D**inner Theatre: St. Paul-Calvary United Methodist Church invites you to see "Murder at the Pie Auction" on April 24, 25, 26 at 6 pm for dinner and the show, or Sunday Matinee, April 27th at 2 pm with dessert only. Reservations: Call Larry Rhinehart (570-546-7294).

**O**rgan Concert: Faxon Kenmar United Methodist Church Presents Organist Dan Umholtz at their Spring Concert on Sunday, April 27, 2014 at 2 pm. Dan is young, dynamic, and lots of fun! Don't miss it.

**T**he Power of Forgiveness Creates an Uncommon Bond: After his son was murdered, Walt Everett did what few would. He reached out to the man who killed him. Tuesday, April 29<sup>th</sup> Rev. Walter H. Everett will speak at St Joseph the Worker Parish Hall at 7 pm. He is a retired United Methodist pastor, having served churches in NJ, NY, and PA. In 1987, his 24 year old son, Scott, was murdered in CT. After living a year with debilitating rage, he started the healing process through the act of forgiveness. He began corresponding with the offender, then visiting him, eventually advocating for Him before the parole board. Please join us to listen to his message of healing forgiveness.

**F**lute Choir Concert: Join us for a wonderful evening of music at St. Joseph the Worker Parish sanctuary at 702 W. 4<sup>th</sup> St., on Saturday May 3, at 7:30 pm. The Williamsport Flute Choir is growing quickly. You'll hear the familiar C flute, as well as the piccolo, alto flutes, and even the big bass flute at the bottom. With music ranging from classics to pops and everything in between, the Williamsport Flute choir plays a wide variety of music, so they're certain to have something to appeal to all.



Faith-based Initiative Committee  
The Rev. Andrew France, Chair  
651 Harding Ave., Williamsport PA 17701  
570-419-6635 / [amfrance@comcast.net](mailto:amfrance@comcast.net)

---

April 4, 2014

Dear Colleagues:

Each one of us has been touched in some way by the epidemic of heroin abuse which has invaded our area. I have personally experienced the loss of a son to a heroin overdose. Perhaps you, like the France family, have people within your congregation who are struggling with their own addiction or the addiction of a loved one. This drug knows no social, economic, ethnic or religious boundaries.

The Heroin Task Force was instituted last fall by the District Attorney's office, in conjunction with law enforcement and the local Judiciary, to help stem the flow of this drug (as well as other narcotics) into Williamsport and surrounding communities. Ten sub-committees have been formed to assist in prevention, treatment, education and enforcement. The Faith-based Initiative Committee, of which I am chair, consists of ten members from various faith communities in our area.

Our mission statement is: "To facilitate healing in spirit through the power of God's love." What better place to begin this healing than with the people of God? The purpose of this letter is three-fold:

- 1) to make you aware of our mission and disseminate information to your congregants;
- 2) to request that you invite one or more members of our committee to come and speak with the people of your faith community;
- 3) to encourage your support and prayers for the work of the Heroin Task Force.

If you or someone within your congregation would be interested in serving with us on the committee, we welcome new members. The task before us is monumental, but we serve a powerful God. Our next meeting will be Tuesday, April 29, 3 p.m. in the lounge at New Covenant United Church of Christ, 202 East Third Street, Williamsport. In the meantime, please use my contact information given above, if you have questions or would like to discuss the possibility of a guest speaker. You will find updates in the United Churches of Lycoming County newsletters. You can also follow the work of the entire "Lycoming County Heroin Task Force" on facebook.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Canon Andrew France

***"To facilitate healing of spirit through the power of God's love."***