



# UNITED CHURCHES' NEWS

Published Monthly by the  
**UNITED CHURCHES OF LYCOMING COUNTY**  
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*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 XXX NUMBER 3

MARCH 12, 2013

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 \*

**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 kits you have been getting ready should be brought to First United Methodist Church, Williamsport. Remember to use the door by the fountain at the point of Market and Packer Streets. The church will be open from 9 - 11 a.m. and on Saturday, May 4 to accept and record your donations.

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 at that time or sent to the office of United Churches, 202 E. 3<sup>rd</sup> St., Wmspt. PA 17701



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 until September. The deadline for items for this edition is Thursday, May 8. It will be mailed May 14. Please remember to send in....

Vacation Bible School Information  
Baccalaureate Information  
Summer Block Parties etc.

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)

**CAMPUS MINISTRY \* Sharon Comini, Coordinator, [ucm@uclc.org](mailto:ucm@uclc.org)**

Seeking the Peace of the City

We started our mission trip at St. Mark Lutheran here in Williamsport, with Pastor Elkin commissioning our team as short term missionaries in New York City during worship. Early Monday we were on our way to St. Paul's house, a soup kitchen in the heart of Times Square, where we led a worship service, served breakfast and cleaned up. We led singing and read scripture. Our worship focused on the verses:

- Jeremiah 29:11 ~ For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.
- Psalm 139:13-14 ~ For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

Our message was "You Matter to God" and reminded us that no matter what situation we find ourselves, God is with us and will never leave because we matter to Him.

Our next activity was a prayer walk through the city beginning in Battery Park. We learned some of the history of New York, and prayed for our diverse cultures as we faced Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty. At the financial district we prayed for our national economy. Then we prayed for the different neighborhoods (Chinatown, Little Italy, and Harlem) and for the diversity that exists in each. We prayed for peace in the city and in our nation.

We also participated in an urban plunge experience exploring the neighborhood of Harlem. I was pleasantly surprised. The media depicts Harlem as dangerous and drug infested, but I saw a clean, friendly environment where residents are proud of their culture, know each other, and feel safe. People either smiled, smirked, or grinned at us as we passed. We were told, "It was a lot more than we would have gotten from someone in midtown." They told us that Harlem was their home and they were happy there.

After our plunge, we worked in the New York Common Pantry serving over 300 guests dinner. I think the hardest part was serving families with small children. Homelessness hits families as well, something I really had not thought about. By the end of our first day of serving, we were tired, but happy. Our faith was stretched, and we had learned a lot about ourselves, each other, and the commitment it takes to serve unselfishly on a daily basis. I saw growth in the students too. Each of them had led a group in prayer, and for some that was a huge step in their faith.

Tuesday, we spent the morning helping staff at a women's shelter prepare their facility for a state inspection. We inspected and changed mattresses, and cleaned/sanitiz-

ed the rooms for their 150 guests. We met a resident named Barbara, who was glad we had come to help clean her home. Her toothless smile warmed our hearts.



We ended our time of service in NYC with a scripture reading of Jesus washing the disciples' feet, then took turns washing each other's feet. It was a humbling experience and a reminder that our service doesn't end when we go home. I hope it is just a beginning of the students' commitment to being Jesus' hands and feet wherever they go.

Here are some of the thoughts that the students had about the mission trip.

~Going to NYC to work with the homeless WAS AN AMAZING, EYE OPENING EXPERIENCE. IT WAS HUMBLING TO LOOK AT THE CITY AND ITS PEOPLE THROUGH THE EYES OF OUR HEAVENLY FATHER AND STRIVE TO TREAT EVERYONE AS IF THEY WERE JESUS. IT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO STEP OUTSIDE OUR COMFORT ZONE AND LIVE IN COMMUNITY BUT IT ALSO BRINGS US CLOSER TO GOD AND EACH OTHER WHEN WE ARE PUSHED TO OUR LIMITS. I FEEL VERY BLESSED TO HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SERVE IN THE CITY, TO SPIRITUALLY GROW AND SERVE. Ali Dincher ~ SENIOR

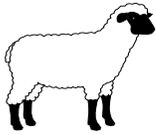
~Spending three days in NYC taught me not to take what I have for granted, because many people would prefer a small piece of my life. I learned that you shouldn't reject someone because they are different, for we are all children of God. In the end, I felt content and happy with what I did during the week. God always ensures his servants never work alone. You never know who God will put in your path, but you must be ready to open up when He does. Colin Foreman ~ SENIOR

~I WENT ON THE MISSION TRIP TO NYC WITH UCM. I HAD A LOT OF FUN, AND LEARNED A LOT ABOUT THE HOMELESS AND ABOUT OTHER CULTURES. IT WAS A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE AND I WOULD RECOMMEND THIS TRIP TO ANYONE. IT WAS AN EYE OPENER TO THE WORLD OUTSIDE YOUR OWN. Victoria Frick ~ JUNIOR

~I HAD A GREAT EXPERIENCE. I'D GO AGAIN! MY FAVORITE PART WAS SEEING THE GRATITUDE ON THE FACES OF THE HOMELESS WE SERVED. IT IS WONDERFUL WHAT THE FOOD CENTERS AND HOMELESS SHELTERS DO TO HELP THE LESS FORTUNATE. GOD HAS OPENED MY EYES TO HELP ME SEE THAT I AM BLESSED TO HAVE A HOME, FAMILY AND FRIENDS. THIS TRIP HAS STRENGTHENED MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND I AM THANKFUL. Hannah Rall ~ SENIOR

~THIS WAS MY FIRST MISSION TRIP. I ENJOYED SERVING THE HOMELESS AND TALKING WITH THEM. I WAS REMINDED THAT GOD LOVES ALL OF US, NO MATTER WHO WE ARE. I WOULD DEFINITELY GO ON ANOTHER MISSION TRIP AND WORK WITH THOSE LESS FORTUNATE THAN ME. Christina Comini ~ HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR

We would like to thank everyone who supported our mission trip financially and through your prayers. We couldn't have done it without you.



## SHEPHERD OF THE STREETS\*

J. Morris Smith, Th. D.,

Contact at: 322-6538 or [shepherd@uclc.org](mailto:shepherd@uclc.org)

4/1/1988 – 4/1/2013: TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

**I**n the eyes of the world, April 1st is a day for tricking people into believing the ridiculous and making foolish decisions. Such cunning made fools of our first parents, causing original sin and bringing ruin to the human race. Mankind has followed from that time to this, his own faulty reasoning, based on human understanding, base assumptions, passions, earthly evidence, carnal appetites, diabolical disorder and selfish ambition, resulting in ignorance of real life, superstition that denies the truth, and sins that miss the mark of reality. Foolishness is defined as that which is without good sense or wisdom; silly, unwise, ridiculous, absurd, and embarrassing.

In the late 1980's, people began to come to Williamsport in need of a better environment in which to recover from abuse and unhealthy lifestyles, to find a better community to raise their children, to escape criminal elements and begin afresh. The impact of these people drew the attention of those in outreach ministry and the churches, that not only must there be assistance in the mundane concerns of living, but in spiritual direction and guidance, establishing good life upon true wisdom, not confusing life with living. Such a renewal must not only establish a change of environment, a new way of living unencumbered by former issues and temptations, but new life through and through, a way of life that is established on eternal truth, divine insight, and empowered by faith, hope, and love.

On April 1st, 1988 Shepherd of the Streets was launched to counsel faith into the mix of the fears, frustrations, frenzies, and foolishness of so many, so ill prepared, so naïve. The United Churches of Lycoming County became the covering for that which has increased in the capacity to provide spiritual direction and physical aid, especially in the areas of health and safety, linking healing and protection to the grace of God, sowing the seeds of faith, hope, and love through the mercy and wisdom of God, providing deliverance from the imprisonments of untruth.

The ways and wisdom of this world, has made fools of those seeking real peace and well-being. The cross of Christ is foolishness to those who have been defrauded, deceived and demonized by the philosophies of this world, but it is the wisdom of God to provide power, providence, and preservation to people of faith. The wisdom of God has made the wisdom of this world foolishness. Christ crucified is foolishness to the world, but for those who have faith the cross proclaims the salvation, redemption, and deliverance of those imprisoned by falsehood and folly.

For the past twenty-five years, Shepherd of the Streets has been the arm of the churches of Lycoming County to reach beyond the material or monetary relief providing medicine and safety, healthy solutions and new beginnings,

but also to show a way of truth and life, so that those whose mind and heart has been conformed to this age, may have the opportunity to be transformed by dynamic faith and renewal of the mind.

Faith matters, for without faith there is no hope of change. Faith matters, for without faith one is made a fool to repeat patterns of denial, disturbance, and destruction.



### 25 Years of Shepherd of the Streets History

The report for the first six months of our Shepherd of the Streets Ministry began with these words...

Recently, we as a nation, witnessed the launching of the space shuttle Discovery. This event was, for us, more than just a technological success. It symbolized both healing and new hope for all humanity in our common quest for progress through shared commitment.

This year, in our own community, through the cooperative efforts of United Churches of Lycoming County, we have launched a new ministry of hope and healing: the Shepherd of the Streets. This ministry is directed to serve the emotional and spiritual needs of the poor, unemployed, estranged, homeless, and hungry. In short, among those who are lacking basic human needs and amenities.

Christ's proclamation in the gospel of Luke, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me," has become a reality for us in Williamsport in that we feel called to bring the *Good News* with its healing and hopeful power to the poor. Christ has called us to witness and service. As a Christian community, we are striving to be faithful to that call through this new ministry. During the past six months the Shepherd had over 330 one-to-one interviews with people whose needs included; housing, suicide, mental illness, unwanted pregnancy, drug addiction, alcohol abuse, run aways, loneliness, child abuse, medical assistance, homelessness, hunger, fuel assistance and depression. Our ministry is vitally important to many who are in need in our community. Tears have turned to smiles. Broken hearts are mending. And for many, light is beginning to overcome darkness.

**DIAL - A - DEVOTION \***

Have you called yet?  
The number is 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 devotionists this fall include:

4/8-14 Rev. Margaret Balliet 4/15-21 Pastor Dorothy Anderson  
4/22-28 - Mrs. Patty Gohrs 4/29-5/5 Pastors Jim and Kathy Behrens  
5/6-12 - Rev. Margaret Balliet 5/13-19 - Rev. Ken Wagner-Pizza

*Listen today and tell others about this ministry!*

**WEDNESDAY NOON ECUMENICAL LUNCHES\***

**J**oin us Wednesdays for lunch and a program. The lunch line opens about 11:45 a.m. and you are always assured of a tasty \$6 lunch, warm ecumenical fellowship and a thoughtful program designed to enrich your life mentally, physically, spiritually and socially.

The parking is free in the Pine Street lot north of the church from 11 to 1:30. No reservations are necessary, but a call United Churches 322-1110 or 419-1464 if you are not a regular attender will help our caterer know how much food to prepare. Laity, clergy and people of all ages are welcome!

**APRIL:**

- 10- **Mr. Phillip Landers**, Retired Professor, Penn College, Enrolled Agent - IRS, and Sight Coordinator for AARP Tax Program, *"Taxes, Senior Citizens and the IRS"*  
17- **Mr. Curley Jett**, Retired Williamsport Police Officer, *"Better Safe than Sorry"*  
24- **Ryan Miller**, Edward Jones Investments, **Jim Malee**, Malee Law Firm (Wills & POAs), **Virla Ocker**, The Hillside A Senior Living Community, **Kevin Novotny**, James C. Maneval Funeral Home, (End of Life Planning), *"Key Life Decisions: Are You Prepared?"*

**MAY:**

- 1- **Mrs. Rhonda McDonald** and **Mrs. Karen Wingate**, Journey House of New Covenant United Church of Christ *"Four Families at a Time Moving from Homelessness to Self Sufficiency"*  
8- **Mrs. Carolyn Mayer**, Area Crafter and Artist of Shady Secrets *"Making Lampshades Glow"*  
15- **Mr. Phil and Mrs. Gail Landers**, Long Term Disaster Relief, *"Celebrating Families Being Back In Their Homes after Tropical Storm Lee"*

22- **The Rev. Larry Leland**, Pastor, Faith United Methodist Church, Montoursville. *"Finding Living Water"*

29- **The Rev. J. Morris Smith, Th.D.**, Shepherd of the Streets: *"Celebrating Twenty-five Years of Ministry!"*  
This is a ministry that everyone in our congregations and community is welcome to participate in. Make plans to join us and bring a friend!

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



Save the date: Friday Sept. 27

Spring is really coming! Hopefully by the time you read this, it is here. And our 3rd 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 ...

- be a church sponsor (\$50)
- find a foursome within their church that will play (\$80 per golfer)
- find a sponsorship for the event (Tournament Sponsors \$500 down to Hole Sponsor \$100 and levels in between)
- find a few door prizes for our golfers (every golfer gets one so we need around 120)

then indeed this year's tournament would be amazing.

Our first two years have been nothing short of amazing as well with us raising over \$8,000 each 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 tickets are now printed with 3 major prizes already as well as many more that will be won by someone. 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 \$900 gift certificate to Golfsmith.com or beautiful paintings, or.. Well our list of prizes goes on and on.

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 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.

**FOOD PANTRY \***

*Gail Burkhart, Coordinator 322-1657*

*E-mail - [foodpantry@uclc.org](mailto:foodpantry@uclc.org)*

**T**he warmer weather finally makes it feel like the calendar isn't playing a joke on us and it really is Spring! Welcome! It was my intention to 'introduce' you to some of our clients this month and tell you a little bit about them. Instead, as a result of a visit to the pantry by a husband and wife who thought they might be able to help fill a volunteer position, I'd like to take the opportunity to explain how we come up with the list of needed food items that we usually insert in each month's newsletter.



Sometimes we can be so close to a subject that we fail to see the obvious: how did we get there? The visiting gentleman looked around the pantry and asked “why do you ask for certain food items when it looks like you have plenty of food here?” Well, the short answer is that the food we have may not all be the items that we actually could use to fill our clients needs!

Folks are traditionally generous around holidays with donations, and we are thankful anytime someone brings items for our shelves. But not all people see all things the same way. For instance, a donation of whole wheat pasta, for example, may be a favorite healthy choice that every family should appreciate. But the reality is that not all people are on board with the healthy eating thing and that whole wheat pasta may sit on the shelf for awhile as folks pass it by for something different. Some folks are really happy to see that item on the shelf, but others prefer the traditional pasta we all grew up with. That leads us to suggest certain things when we request donated foods.

In my mind, I like to see us be able to offer each client things like pasta, pasta sauce, canned fruit, tuna, canned veggies, tea or coffee, cereal and maybe a dessert type thing like cake mix, or jello. The pantry usually supplies two meat items per client. But the other items on this list are things that I see in my own grocery cart to fill out meals like pasta that can be stretched to fill empty bellies. I'd also like to work toward our Pantry teaching clients about nutrition so that things like whole wheat pasta fly off the shelves! But we have to take baby steps when trying to break habits that are generations old.

Of course, there are other factors about the food that we supply our clients, such as government supplied items or those made available for us to purchase with government funds, to do what we do: feed hungry people.

So, this month, the things we need to fill out the gro-

cery bags of food that we give folks to help them and their families survive are...

- |                         |                |                           |
|-------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Coffee</i>           | <i>Sugar</i>   | <i>Spaghetti Sauce</i>    |
| <i>Canned Fruit</i>     | <i>Tuna</i>    | <i>Juices</i>             |
| <i>Saltine Crackers</i> | <i>Cereals</i> | <i>Powdered Drink Mix</i> |
| <i>Pork &amp; Beans</i> | <i>Ketchup</i> | <i>Chunky Soups</i>       |
|                         |                | <i>Mac-N-Cheese</i>       |

We continue to see an increase each month in the number of clients that we have assisted. In March, we served approximately 400 people that constituted over 190 families. Our present location is really convenient and the wonderful space in the building itself is a joy for our volunteers to work in each week. It also seems that we have new volunteers filling the openings that we had and we're now rolling along on a normal schedule. Thank you all for that!

We'd like to give a shout out to Cub Scout Pack 12 from Montoursville and both the Boy Scout and Cub Scout troops from St Luke Lutheran Church, Williamsport for the wonderful results of their annual food drive for the United Churches Food Pantry: you guys are **AWESOME!** Thanks for your faithful help. The food that you collected will help to carry us through the summer when our donations traditionally are less but actually our need continues at the same pace or the need can be more due to the cut in summer feeding programs by the government. **YOU ROCK!**

And of course, as well as food donations, we are always in need of prayer. We appreciate all the help that you are so willing to give and hope that you all have a good month as we get ready for the longer, warmer, sunnier months of summer. Be blessed.

**Church Women United - May Friendship Day**  
 Friday, May 3, 2013  
 South Williamsport United Methodist Church  
 409 Main Street, South Williamsport  
 Lunch: Noon, Program beginning at 1:15 p.m.  
 Theme: “Swinging Wide the Doors of Hospitality”  
 Luncheon Cost - \$8 per person

Church Women United has a long history of inviting women of diverse races, cultures and traditions to draw together in Christian fellowship. There are many opportunities and challenges confronting us. Doors are opening, closing, and being broken down. Which doors do we peek into? Which door do we swing wide? In this service we hope to reach out to all women in our community, thereby swinging wide doors of hospitality.

Luncheon reservations must be received by April 23 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.

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

**I**s this not the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house. (Isaiah 58:6-7)

The need to act for justice and in charity did not end with Easter. We are called to be followers of Jesus in working with and on behalf of those experiencing poverty in our communities, nation, and the world.

**Lycoming County Unemployment Rate for January 2013 is Highest in Recent Years:** The preliminary unemployment rate for our county for Jan. 2013 was 9.5 %. This is a significant increase and one of the highest since the economic downturn began in 2008.

**Governor's Budget Proposal and the State Food Purchase Program (SFPP):** The State Food Purchase Program is the main source for food distributed by our United Churches Food Pantry and many other pantries in the county that rely on SFPP. Since 2006-07, SFPP eligibly has increased 42.9 percent while funding has dropped 7.5 percent. More than 1.36 million PA. residents now qualify for the program. The governor's budget for 2013-14 leaves current funding unchanged. Even if unemployment rates decline, the need for food assistance is likely to remain high for quite some time, as returns to food security lag behind employment returns. (Source: Hunger-Free Pennsylvania: A Network of Food Banks & Charitable Organizations)

**April is National Letter Writing Month** — a perfect time to send hand-written notes to friends, family, and your members of Congress and members of the PA State Legislature. Why not use Letter Writing Month as an opportunity to write to elected officials and ask that they provide adequate funding for programs that address hunger and help lift people out of poverty. In this digital age, it may seem out of date to write personal letters to elected officials, but it tells them that you are so concerned about hunger & poverty that you've taken time to put pen to paper and write. While any contact you make is great, hand-writing a letter is a very personal way to connect. (Source: Bread for the World)

**Comprehensive Immigration Reform:** Conditions that Push People to Emigrate: Many of those who are currently labeled as undocumented immigrants in our country have been in effect pushed by dire poverty in their own countries and by the impact of "free trade" especially of subsidized U.S. agricultural products. Farm families living at the subsistence level in coun-

tries such as Mexico cannot compete with lower priced imports. Fair trade and eradicating hunger and poverty in other countries need to be included in any comprehensive approach to immigration reform.

**DATES TO REMEMBER:**

United Churches Sunday: May 26

United Churches Golf Tournament - Friday, September 27

CROP Walk - Sunday, October 13

United Churches Annual Assembly - Tuesday, November 19

**CREATION CORNER***from our Christian Social Concerns Committee***The Pope's propitious choice of a name: Francis**

**I**n his first address to the nearly 200 members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See, the newly-elected Pope explained his name choice, Francis (of Assisi), by proclaiming a primary concern for the world's poor while others in the world greedily exploit nature for their own selfish values.

Saint Francis of Assisi is adopted by many ecologists as their patron saint.

Citing his predecessor Benedict's criticism of the "tyranny of relativism", whereby the co-existence of peoples takes second place to individualistic values, Pope Francis decried the material poverty that derives from such "spiritual poverty." As peaceful co-existence is threatened by such personally proclaimed selfish rights, we should work for peace.

To create a more humane and just world, to work for peace, we need to care for the good of others, to build bridges connecting all people, especially promoting a dialog between one end of the world and another as we become more interdependent. And such a dialog needs to occur among all the world's religions.

In sum, fighting poverty, both material and spiritual, building peace and constructing bridges are the reference points for the journey he wishes to invite us to join. "But," as he concluded, "it is a difficult journey, if we do not learn to grow in love for this world of ours. Here too, it helps me to think of Francis, who teaches a profound respect for the whole of creation and the protection of our environment, which all too often, instead of using for the good, we exploit greedily, to one another's detriment."

**YOKEFELLOW PRISON MINISTRY (YPM)**

*Rev. Danesta (Nessie) Whaley,  
North Central Regional Director - 326-6868*

**W**e celebrate our newness in Christ Jesus – Resurrection life in HIM!  
Come and Join Us for Our Awareness Banquet!

Do you desire to know more about Yokefellow and what you can do by filling the mandate of our Lord to minister to the ‘least of these’? It is not too late to join us: Reservations must be in by Monday, April 15

When: Tuesday, April 23 @ 6:00pm

Where: Roads to Freedom

(The Center For Independent Living)

24 East Third St., Wmspt. (across from 33 East)

What: A catered sit down turkey dinner provided by Station House

Keynote speaker: Judge Marc Lovecchio

Theme “If I Could See through Your Eyes”

This will be an evening of community awareness of the outreach and impact ministry of Yokefellow Prison Ministry co-laboring with the Criminal justice system for transformation of lives.

Reservations are required and must be made by Monday, April 15 by calling the Yokefellow office at 326-6868.

**EDUCATIONAL EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

**E**xplore Contemplation and Spiritual Direction - -  
A Retreat Day of Learning: Needing a break? Looking for a chance to learn more about what contemplation is? What is Spiritual Direction? Come join us for ‘a day apart’ coupled with an introduction to contemplation and spiritual direction. Leaders will be exploring with participants the nature of contemplation, the work of spiritual direction, and the many program offerings of Oasis Ministries. This is a great opportunity to invite a few friends and come out for a day of quiet, exploration and introduction. Join them on Saturday, May 11, 2013 from 9:30 a.m.—3:30 p.m. at St. Luke Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1400 Market St. Williamsport. The leaders will be:

- Melanie Taormina, a 2010 graduate of Oasis's Spiritual Direction for Spiritual Guides program. She served as an Authorized Lay Worship Leader in the Southwestern PA Synod of the ELCA. She has participated in numerous retreats and spent time at the Taize Community in France. She practices spiritual direction in Williamsport, where she lives with her husband and young son.
- Mary Lou Hatcher has completed Oasis' Spiritual Direction for Spiritual Guides and Deepening Year programs. She is a practicing Quaker having served her

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINISTRY**

**H**ealthy Families/EMS Expo will be held on May 18th from 10:00-2:00. This event is done with many partners, and churches groups and agencies in our community who promote health/healthy living in some way are invited to participate and have a table at this event. For more information contact Tonya at Rick Mirabito's office, 321-1270.

**C**PR Learning Opportunity: The PA. Dept. of Health is offering free CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) skills training. This is a non-certifying class lasting ~45-60 minutes. During the class “Hands Only” CPR skills are taught as well as information on rescue breathing, what to do for choking, and how to use an automated external defibrillator. The class features the American Heart Association's program call “Family and Friends CPR Anytime.” Each participant will receive a training kit, which includes an instructional DVD and “Mini Anne” resuscitation device, to take home following the session. The intent of the program is to increase the likelihood that a bystander will provide life-saving CPR to someone who needs it. You never know when someone may need to save a life. For further information or to schedule a class for members of your congregation or group contact Becky Lewis, R.N., at the PA Dept. of Health 570-327-3400.

local Quaker Meeting in the areas of religious education, pastoral care and social concerns. She currently has a Spiritual Direction practice through Princeton Theological Seminary.

The suggested donation for the day is \$10-\$25 as you are able. Please bring a bag lunch for the day. To register contact Betsy Keller at 717.737.8222 or [betsykeller@oasismin.org](mailto:betsykeller@oasismin.org) or register on-line at [www.oasismin.org/ExploreOasis.html](http://www.oasismin.org/ExploreOasis.html). Learn more [www.oasismin.org](http://www.oasismin.org).

Offered by: Oasis Ministries For Spiritual Development.

**CORNERSTONE ADDS COUNSELOR**

Cornerstone Family Health has added another counselor to their psychotherapy department. Elise Meckbach, LPC is now available to see clients. She has her MS in Christian Counseling from Philadelphia Biblical University. Elise has over 11 years of experience in schools (both public and alternative), home settings, and outpatient clinics. Elise has provided individual, family, marriage, and group counseling during her career. She enjoys working with all ages but is most passionate about the adolescent population and their families. She and Timothy Bryant, PhD, LMFT and David Rising EdD can be reached at 326-4118. More information is available at [www.fpcdoctors.com/counseling.asp](http://www.fpcdoctors.com/counseling.asp).

## EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE AREA

**AIDS Walk 2013** will be held Sunday, April 21 at the Lycoming College Rec Center. Registration begins at Noon. Walks begins at 12:45 P.M. All the money raised through this walk will stay in our community to help those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. For more information contact Aids Resource at 570-322-8448 or e-mail them at [walk@aidsresource.com](mailto:walk@aidsresource.com).

**FAMILY PROMISE Fundraiser: Giant Yard Sale!** Messiah Lutheran Church will host a yard sale at the First Ward Fire Hall on Hastings Street in South Williamsport (across from Dairy Queen) on Saturday, April 27, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Gently used items may be donated to the sale by dropping them off at the fire hall on Friday, April 26, between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. All proceeds benefit Family Promise of Lycoming County. For details, contact Mary Ellen Rosenbaum at 323-0550 or Jill LaVallée at 478-0630.

**Total Woman Conference** will be held Saturday, April 27 from 10-2 at the Holiday Inn, 100 Pine Street, Wmspt. Sponsored by Day by Day Ministries, the donation is \$10 including lunch. Contact [daybydayministries2011@yahoo.com](mailto:daybydayministries2011@yahoo.com) or (570) 220-8063.

**Twinkie Clark** will be here in Concert on Saturday, April 27 at 7:00 p.m. at Curtin Middle School, Williamsport. Also performing will be the Our Lady of Lourdes Choir and Kim Adair and Soulful. This Gospel Celebration is entitled "Let Go, Let God". Twinkie is part of the legendary Clark Sisters and a two time Grammy Award winner. Tickets are \$20 and are available at Our Lady of Lourdes, Christian Light Bookstore, Day by Day Ministries, [www.iTickets.com](http://www.iTickets.com) & Redeemed Ministry.

**The Fourth Annual Billtown Film Festival** is scheduled to show 6 hours of independent films, over a 3-night event at the Community Arts Center in downtown Williamsport on April 28, 29 and 30, 2013. It will be free and open to the public.

This year they will host the 25th Anniversary screening of Lise Yasui's Oscar nominated "A Family Gathering".

The Billtown Film Festival will also show the art scene in York, Pennsylvania. The film by Brian Plow is called "A Day in the Sun". For more information check out [www.billtownfilmfestival.com](http://www.billtownfilmfestival.com).

**National Day of Prayer:** A service will be held on Thursday, May 2. This year it will be a full day of prayer beginning at 10 a.m. and continuing until 7 p.m. There will be different leaders throughout the day.

Come and be part of the day. Much will be accomplished when we pray together for our wonderful country and for each other. It is expected to be outside City Hall.

**FREE Clothing Exchange** will be held at Messiah Lutheran Church on the corner of Howard St. and West Southern Ave. from 8-11 a.m. on Saturday, May 4. As you do your Spring Cleaning, please consider donating gently used items for the exchange. Please bring only those items that are in good repair and suitable to be worn. Donations of clothing may be dropped off in the bin inside the Bald Eagle Alley entrance weekdays from 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. NO money will change hands – bring what you can, take what you need. If you can't bring anything, that's okay, we want to give it all away, so please come – all are welcome!

**5K Hike Walk / Run Trek for Memories and Futures:** St Michaels Relay For Life team has organized a 5k (3.1 miles) timed event that will be held Saturday May 4 starting at 10am at Rider Park, Montoursville. Event is for all levels of fitness and will follow blue-blazed "Cheryl's Trail". The trail is a dry, wide, and well groomed. Registration is \$20 before April 19 and will increase to \$25 from April 20 through day of event. T-shirts guaranteed for registrations up till April 19. Contact [Theresa.Miller@cancer.org](mailto:Theresa.Miller@cancer.org) or 570-916-9764. All proceeds will benefit the American Cancer Society! Registration is also available online at [www.parunners.com](http://www.parunners.com).

**Rally in the Alley:** Messiah Lutheran Church, South Williamsport, will have **free food - games - crafts** on Saturday, May 11, 4-7 p.m. There will be something for all ages. The community is invited! Then at...

**6 p.m. - Free Christian Concert Featuring "New Dawn"** New Dawn is an acoustic-style band that offers music and entertainment for all ages. The group is currently touring in Taiwan and the Philippines. A free will offering will be taken to support the band.

**Blessing of the Bikes** will be held Saturday, May 11 at 11 a.m. at Housepower Harley-Davidson on the Golden Strip (1910 E 3<sup>rd</sup> St, Wmspt.). There will be food and live music. All models of bikes are welcome. Come and have your bike blessed for the season.

**Bus Trip to Sight and Sound Theatres'** to see "Noah" plus a dinner at Hershey Farm Restaurant after the show. Date: October 14, 2013. Cost \$110.00. With the Divine Retiree Travelers. Contact Vicky Bohner 368-7078 or Susan Rook 478-2105.