



UNITED CHURCHES' NEWS

Published Monthly by the
UNITED CHURCHES OF LYCOMING COUNTY
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DECEMBER 10, 2013

Please notify us if you changes of e-mail address

Thank You for receiving our Newsletter via E-Mail. It is a wonderful donation of postage, office supplies and volunteer time.

ANNUAL ASSEMBLY NEWS

We gathered around tables at the Fleming Center of St. Joseph the Worker Parish, Williamsport to celebrate 67 years of the ministry that we do together and to get to know each other better. The baked ham dinner and hospitality of the congregation certainly blessed us that evening as we celebrated some of the ways we work together today, and continue to envision ways to develop the ecumenical movement in this place and in this time.

The staff was recognized and thanked for their excellent work. Each passionately works with many of the 240+ congregations to help them build relationship to work together in ministry and to better understand each other.

- Mrs. Patty Gohrs, United Churches Adm. Assistant
- J. Morris Smith, Th.D., Shepherd of the Streets
- Ms. Toni Fogal, Shepherd of the Streets Adm. Assistant
- Ms. Gail Burkhart, Food Pantry Coordinator
- Mrs. Tammey Aichner, Campus Ministry Coordinator
- Rev. Gwen Bernstine, Exec Director, United Churches

All entries for the Poster Contest for our Shepherd of the Streets 25th Anniversary were displayed that evening. We had forty-five entries! They did a great job highlighting how well we work together to help people in our community. Bonnie Mahoney announced the winners: K and 1st Grades,

Clark Bower and Samantha Logue; 2nd /3rd Grades : Gabrielle Campana and Andrew Lebeder; 4th-6th Grades: Kylie Cendoma and Sam Swimley, and 7th Grade: Danielle Rice.

Some memories were shared of the ministry and then Dr. Morris Smith, our Shepherd for the past twelve years, *-continued on page 2*

The Staff, Officers and Board Members of United Churches hope that you and those for whom you pray experience many blessings during your Advent and Christmas journey.



May we all be open to receive anew the love, joy, peace and hope that only He can bring, at Christmas and every day of the year.

NEWS FROM THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY -continued from page 1

shared that this ministry to serve the poor has taught us poverty is pervasive, predictive, painful and paralyzing. We've learned that dealing with poverty is a mystery. For we are blessed through our compassion - sympathy - empathy - charity - tolerance - mercy and unselfish love. We are called to share the word of truth as we reach out to those in need.

Our annual book told stories of our United Churches ministries including the facts that...

- Our Pantry fed the hungry and found many new consumers as we moved from The Center to the Castellano Center of St. Joseph the Worker Parish in January.
- Our Shepherd Ministry continues to bring hope to those in need, and help people draw closer to God. They provided help to over 4,899 in the past 12 months.
- Over 100 volunteers are going out to nursing homes, assisted living centers and our county prison to provide over 800 worship services this year.
- We welcomed a new Campus Ministry Coordinator to our staff this summer, Mrs. Tammey Aichner. All students from last year graduated. We are pleased to have collected a nice group of 7-12 depending on the activity.
- Long Term Disaster Relief Committee completed tasks associated with the 2011 flooding from Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. They await future responses.

This year has been full with visioning experiences and the blessing of our 3rd Golf Tournament (Thanks Ken Weiss!) Our financial reports show that our continued program cuts of 20% less staff hours have helped us stabilize. This and better fund raising, increased congregational giving, and individual and community commitments make a difference. Our financial position is up \$32,052.89 in three years. We do need more fund raisers throughout the year. The 2014 budget of \$154,939.00 was approved.

People elected new to the board are: Mrs. Yvonne Shenuski, the Rev. Elizabeth Aurand, the Rev. Robin Baer and Mrs. LaVon Hawley. Moving to new positions are, the Rev. Viking Dietrick, Interfaith Dialogue; the Rev. Ann Runnels, Food Pantry Chair; Pastor Dorothy Anderson, Shepherd of the Streets Chair; Pastor Wanda Minnick, Second Vice President; the Rev. Kevin Brophy, First Vice President, and the Rev. Ken Wagner-Pizza, President.

Three Ecumenical Service Awards were presented to honor and celebrate the ministry of individuals in our midst.

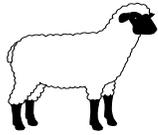
- Gail Landers, an active member of New Covenant United Church of Christ, has dedicated much of her life to helping children to be all that they can be. She helped establish local Latch Key programs and the Children's Learning Center at Penn College. An educator she

works mostly in early childhood as an instructor, supervisor, and developer of programs. She shares her gift of music and drama in her church and our community. Her concern for the care of the earth leads her to serve on the Penn Central Conference's Environmental Committee; develop a "green" nature center at their conference camp and a "green" playground at Penn College. Her work with United Churches includes developing the Footsteps to Follow Newspaper Editorial Ministry, and serving with her husband Phil as a case worker for our Long Term Disaster Recovery Committee.

- Phillip Landers is also an active member of New Covenant United Church of Christ, where he currently serves on a number of committees, as well as regional and national levels. A college professor, he taught students the intricacies of business, accounting and the IRS, and continues to provide his services to low income persons. He enjoys the outdoors, and sports and continues to umpire for a Babe Ruth League. Phil also serves on the Plankenhorn Foundation, the Teacher's Credit Union, and the Old Lycoming Township Authority Review Board. He and Gail have opened their home to Foreign Exchange Students and Kids from the City. He and his wife Gail skillfully and compassionately led our Long Term Disaster Recovery Committee as our case workers. They enjoy going on church mission trips each year.
- Jim Foran, a member of St. Joseph the Worker Parish, and Director of Religious Education, works hard at encouraging everyone to become all God planned for them to be. We are grateful for his outreach in our community to people with limited resources who need assistance. His leadership and assistance with CROP Walk, United Churches Family Life Task Force, Family Promise, and area Food Pantries and St. Anthony's Center are integral to the life of our community. Jim also fosters relationships for inmates through the ministry of Yokefellow Prison Ministry; and to their families through BridgeHaven Ministry and Project Impact. He spent five years living as part of the L'Arche Community, Daybreak, in Ontario, Canada, serving the needs of people with intellectual and physical disabilities.

Focusing on the future was the order of the rest of the evening. Over the last 67 years United Churches has evolved into the organization doing the ministries you now know, and it will continue to evolve. Rob Manzinger encouraged everyone to dare to dream a bit in small groups reflecting on a draft vision statement and ...

- Provide a general response to the draft vision statement.
- Note what they particularly like or have difficulty with.
- Suggest modifications and issues to be discussed.



SHEPHERD OF THE STREETS*

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

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

Shepherd of the Streets is twenty-five years old this year. It has been my privilege to be the “shepherd” for half of that time. As great an honor as it is to minister to the poor (a ministry that Jesus said was of utmost importance), it would be of little meaning if we did not have significant learning’s during this time. All we have learned is true of the general, though particular people will overcome in every generation. It is a ministry that ministers to all in order to save some.

We have learned that **poverty is pervasive**; that it ravages social, physical, mental, and spiritual behaviors, and that all aspects of the human being must be ministered to, that it is not enough to replace what might be lacking or purchase what cannot be afforded.

We have learned that **poverty is predictive**; that we can expect in every community the manifestations that are rooted in certain predictable behaviors. Those behaviors are anger based, consuming any value of the self, controlling thoughts and acts producing unrealistic and unreasonable outcomes.

We have learned that **poverty is painful**; that it produces unique sufferings, perpetual depression, a contemptuous dependency full of worry, anxiety, and fear.

We have learned that **poverty is paralyzing**; generating an insensitive psyche, a nerveless body, stupefying the mind and numbing the spirit.

We have learned that **poverty is more a generational thing**, than an economic or racial or spiritual thing, that children learn its traits and lack of them, from their family. We have learned that family or lack of family lies at the center of one’s attitude and relation to poverty. We have learned that family holds no hope or holiness.

We have learned that **political fairness is not social justice**. Fairness belongs to sports and board games where a referee or a rule balances the playing field. Justice, on the other hand, must be meted out case-by-case, in mercy and truth.

We have learned that **poverty can be the prism** through which we view a mystery, and identify a pearl of great price.

But, we have also learned the ABC’s of walking in that mystery. **Poverty must be appreciated** for what it really is, for only such insight will attract one to the difficulties of dealing with it. Only such an attraction will lead to action to do something about it.

Poverty must be beheld. Only through constant observation and discernment will one be able to adequately deal with it. It will never be overcome. You can so spread the wealth

to make all people poor, but no political strategy can make all people rich. Beholding poverty, peering into it will deepen one’s perception and its mystery will become manifest.

Poverty must conceived with compassion...taken as one’s own, as did Jesus or Francis of Assisi, as did Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King, as did John Paul II and Nelson Mandela. All who have sought to bring justice to the poor became targets for those caught up in materialism and humanism, for it can only be fostered by tolerance and unselfish love (charity).

VOLUNTEER NOW FOR 2014 MINISTRIES*

We are pulling together the ministries schedule for 2014. It’s a big job - over 800 services and 52 newspaper editorials, not to mention over 300 devotions for the telephone ministry! We can’t do it without you. Both clergy and laity are needed:



Nursing Home and Assisted Living Center Worship:

Sundays at 2 weekly: Rose View Center

Manor Care South and Valley View

Sundays at 2:15 weekly: Manor Care North (2 services)

Sundays at 3: Weekly - Williamsport Home (2 services)

Monthly - The Hillside, The Meadows

Rose View Court

Wednesdays at 10:30 weekly - Sycamore Manor

Thursdays at 11 am. weekly - Presbyterian Home

Prison Worship Services (Sundays weekly)

Lycoming County Jail - 1:45 and 3:15 p.m.

PreRelease Center for Men/for Women - 3:30 p.m.

Daily Telephone Devotion Line - Record from your home.

Volunteers have responsibility for one week at a time.

Footsteps to Follow Editorials: Clergy and people in para church leadership are invited to sign up for an editorial in the Saturday morning Sun Gazette.

Please contact us at uclc@sunlink.net or 570-322-1110.

FOOD PANTRY *

Gail Burkhardt, Coordinator 570-322-1657

E-mail - foodpantry@uclc.org

We celebrated our supporters this Thanksgiving, who so faithfully donate food that supplements the food purchased thru the State Food Bank last month. This month I'd like to introduce you to a few of the clients that desperately need our services and are so thankful that the Food Pantry exists for that purpose.



We had a telephone call from a single mother who started her conversation as so many of our folks do by telling me she 'felt funny asking for help' and then went on to say that her only child was a special needs child and had turned 5 and would no longer be eligible for WIC (A federal program that helps new moms give their children healthy food: milk, juice, cereal) and her food stamps had been cut by \$40. She was apologetic because "so many people have it worse" but she was now struggling. With just the price of milk increasing, she was getting behind on the grocery bill.

Then we have a traditional family unit, with a working father, stay at home mom and 5 children. These parents are approved emergency caregivers when children have had to be removed from a dangerous or abusive situation. In time mom falls in love with the children and can't let them be returned to a bad situation. They go to court and fight for the children's rights and adopt them. Dad's income would work if the price of gas was within reach or the price of heating oil would be more reasonable or the bill at the grocery store wasn't so high.

These are the scenarios that play out daily at our pantry. It's such a blessing to be able to say "It's ok, we can help." We're rewarded with smiles of relief. You can imagine how it feels to know you didn't have the means to feed your family? Coming to a warm, welcoming environment where friendly, godly people helped to carry your burden.

The lesson is that because you care, you make it possible for our community pantries to help. So to all who help us with this mission, a heartfelt thank you! And we pray that if there is a burden that you carry, it's known to God and you, too, will be directed to some assistance. We wish everyone the peace and comfort of the blessed holiday season.

We continue to serve upwards of 500 people each month. Some items that we need for the start of 2014 are:

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>noodles of noodles</i> | <i>cup of noodles</i> |
| <i>stuffing mix</i> | <i>canned veggies</i> |
| <i>pop tarts</i> | <i>chunky soups</i> |

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>chicken noodle soup</i> | <i>tomato soup</i> |
| <i>jello & pudding</i> | <i>coffee</i> |
| <i>canned fruits</i> | <i>oatmeal packets [flavored]</i> |
| <i>saltines</i> | <i>mac-n-cheese</i> |
| | <i>popcorn</i> |

Souper Bowl Sunday is one way to help our United Churches Food Pantry, or other groups in our area, to assist people in need. It is an effort to glorify God and care for "the least of these" by each worshiper giving a can of food or the cost of a can of food (\$1) on Super Bowl Sunday (February 2, 2014). Groups call 1-800-358-7687 on the day of the game (between noon and 5 p.m.) to report the amount collected, then send your funds/food to the charity of your choice. Reporting your collection enables the full impact of this simple act of caring to be determined and announced. In 2013 the grand total generated was \$7,477,285 collected in cash and food items by 8,100 groups, their charities. Be part of a modern day miracle by getting your church on board. For details go to: www.souperbowl.org.



Tammy Aichner, Coordinator, ucm@uclc.org

The students are now finishing finals and will be on winter break until mid-January. We started the semester with no returning students and finished with 7 students attending the weekly study. Please pray for continued growth of the ministry and for each student as they travel on their faith journey.

During this time we are doing our preparing for the spring semester. If you'd like to volunteer to facilitate a Faith Talk, an on-campus bible study, this spring, let me know. Thank you to everyone who visited us in the fall. All of the studies were different and each pastor brought their own energy and personality to the group.

We do have an upcoming "need". We would like to participate in a Spring Break mission trip to Philadelphia. In order to make this possible, we will need to fund-raise. We are planning a soup sale early in 2014. If you will make and donate a batch or two of your favorite recipe, e-mail me so we can plan accordingly.

Those of you who have students attending Penn College, please make them aware of our bible study and activities. "Like" us on Face Book, so that they stay posted on events. If you have a special talent or skill you'd like to share with the students, let me know. Keep us in mind when you have an upcoming event. I am putting together a monthly newsletter for students with the information you provide me.

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

He shall have pity for the lowly and the poor; the lives of the poor he shall save. (Psalm 72:13) Some commentators see parts of Psalm 72 as a foretelling of the coming of Christ. Jesus cared for all people in need. During Advent let us reflect on the extent to which we as individuals and as a society care for those experiencing poverty. Are we ready to extend ourselves through charitable actions as well as become advocates of change to economic and political systems that adversely affect many? How will we save the lives of the poor?

Lycoming County Unemployment Rate Increases for October 2013: The preliminary unemployment rate for the county for October 2013 was 7.0 %.

Deliberations in Congress: Who is Saving the Poor? At the beginning of this month Congressional committees were attempting to reach consensus on legislation that included elements of the “safety net.” Proposed SNAP (food stamps) cuts ranged from \$4 to \$40 billion over ten years. Other potential cuts include WIC (infant nutrition), child care, housing vouchers, and hundreds of other programs that help some of the poor. Programs provide assistance to those with the lowest income.

SNAP (Food Stamps) Cuts Already Hurting Many Locally: Cuts to “food stamp” recipients started recently. Local food pantries and meal programs provided by faith-based groups have experienced significant increases in people coming for assistance. Infants, children, adults, and seniors are adversely affected.

Minimum Wage: Five Facts about Those Who Earn It

1. Adjusted for inflation, the federal minimum wage peaked in 1968 at \$8.56 (in 2012 dollars). [The current federal minimum wage of \$7.25 was set in 2009.]
2. Just over half (50.6%) of the 3.55 million U.S. workers who were at or below the federal minimum last year are ages 16 to 24; an additional 20.3% are ages 25 to 34.
3. Nineteen states (plus D.C.) have set their own, higher minimums, ranging from \$7.35 in Missouri to \$9.19 in Washington State.
4. Nearly 21.3 million U.S. workers (or 16.4% of the workforce) would be directly affected by raising the minimum wage.
5. While not strictly minimum-wage workers, almost 23.2 million Americans (17.8% of all wage and salary workers) worked in the nation’s lowest-paid occupations as of last year. Among the lowest paid were retail salespeople, cashiers, food preparers/servers, including fast-food workers, and wait staff.

(Source: Pew Research Center – December 3, 2013)

Minimum and Other Low Wage Jobs: Some Local Realities: Service sector jobs such as those listed above are common in Lycoming County following the decline of manufacturing over recent decades. Many persons coming to food pantries, meal programs, and even homeless shelters are working part-time in the local “service” sector. Sometimes people appear wearing the uniform of their place of employment. Jesus is asking us how will we contribute to saving those living in poverty?

CREATION CORNER*from our Christian Social Concerns Committee*

For the secular environmentalist thinking religion has nothing to say about the Earth, or for the person of faith who is an environmentalist, or for yourself, consider these books for holiday giving.

- ▶ **The Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation.** Richard Bauckham.
- ▶ **The Blue Sapphire of the Mind: Notes for a Contemplative Ecology.** Douglas E. Christie.
- ▶ **Consider the Birds: A Provocative Guide to Birds of the Bible.** Debbie Blue.
- ▶ **Earth-Honoring Faith: Religious Ethics in a New Key.** Larry L. Rasmussen.
- ▶ **God's Good World: Reclaiming the Doctrine of Creation.** Jonathan R. Wilson.
- ▶ **Language of the Fields: Tilling and Keeping as Christian Vocation.** Daniel G. Deffenbaugh.
- ▶ **Love Letter to the Earth.** Thich Nhat Hanh.
- ▶ **Making Peace with the Land: God's Call to Reconcile with Creation.** Fred Bahnson and Norman Wirzba.
- ▶ **Option for the Poor and for the Earth: Catholic Social Teaching.** Donal Dorr (a revision of his 1992 text, *Option for the Poor: A Hundred Years of Vatican Social Teaching*).
- ▶ **Rebirth of the Sacred: Science, Religion and the New Environmental Ethos.** Robert Nadeau.
- ▶ **The Seven Pillars of Creation: The Bible, Science, and the Ecology of Wonder.** William P. Brown.
- ▶ **Shalom and the Community of Creation: An Indigenous Vision.** Randy S. Woodley.
- ▶ **Spiritual Ecology: The Cry of the Earth.** Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee, editor (over 20 contributors/inter-faith essays).
- ▶ **Why Animal Suffering Matters: Philosophy, Theology, and Practical Ethics.** Andrew Linzey.

Also of interest:

- ▶ **Carbon Fast** (daily actions to reduce one's carbon imprint), free on-line at ww.macucc.org/carbonfast .
- ▶ **The Peaceable Table** Journal of Christian animal concerns and compassionate eating. Free on-line at <http://www.vegetarianfriends.net/> .

WEDNESDAY NOON ECUMENICAL LUNCHES*

Join 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, call United Churches, 570-322-1110 if you are not a regular attender will help the caterer, Heidi Potter, know how much food to prepare. Laity, clergy are all welcome! (Call Gwen, 570-419-1464 to check for a weather cancellation.)

**DECEMBER:**

- 11- **Mr. Abel Learwellie**, member of the Lutheran Church in Liberia, *“Trauma, Healing and Reconciliation”*
- 18- **Mrs. Lucy Henry and Mrs. Wendy McCormick**, Area Musicians who specialize in Celtic Music and Old Timey Favorites using hammered dulcimer, flute, celtic harp, accordian, pennywhistle, accordian and etc., *“Sounds of the Season”*

25- **Have a very Merry Christmas!** No lunch scheduled

JANUARY:

- 1- **No Lunch Scheduled - Happy New Year!**
- 8- **Rev. Gwen Bernstine**, United Churches of Lycoming County, *“2014 - A Year To Encourage...”*
- 15- **Pastor Dorothy Anderson**, Co-Pastor, Love Unlimited, *“Let Freedom Ring”*
- 22- **The Rev. Dr. John Charnock**, Director, Mission Integration and Ethics, Susquehanna Health, **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: “Faith Forum: Christians Seeking Unity in Christ”**
- 30- **Captain Debbie Engel**, Auxiliary Captain, Salvation Army, *“Meeting the Physical, Emotional and Spiritual Needs of People of All Ages”*

Make plans to join us and bring a friend!

DIAL - A - DEVOTION *

Have you called yet?

The number is 570-322-5762.

It's available 24 hours a day.



Devotions 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:

12/9-15 Rev. Margaret Balliet 12/16-22 Mrs Dorothy Wagner
12/23-29 Rev Gwen Bernstine 12/30-1/5 Pastors Jim & Kathy Behrens
1/6-12 Mrs. Melanie Taormina 1/13-17 Pastor Dianna Harrod

Listen today and tell others about this ministry!

NEWSLETTER MAILINGS: If you can receive our Newsletter via e-mail please let us know. Not only is it much cheaper and less labor intensive to send it to you over the internet, but we find that now it takes at least a week to have it delivered after we take it to the post office. To make that change, please contact Gwen at director@uclc.org

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. EVENTS

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service will be held at Lycoming College on Saturday, January 18, 2014. Those participating will assemble 40,000 food packs for our North Central Food Bank.

The meal packing will take place at the Lycoming College Recreation Center. The day will begin with a peace walk starting at Campbell Street and Martin Luther King Boulevard and end at the Lycoming Recreation Center about a mile way. There will be guest speakers, music and fun for everyone.

You can help contribute to this worthy cause.

- ▶ Reserve Saturday, January 18 on your calendar as a day you will participate in the day of service. You will help to package 40,000 meals of either rice and beans or macaroni and cheese at the Lycoming College Recreation Center. These sealed packages will be distributed through the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank to families throughout the area.
- ▶ Donate toward the cost of the meals (it costs 25¢ per meal or \$1 to feed a family of four.) Please visit the Indiegogo.com website to make a donation at <http://igg.me/at/wportmlk>.

The day of service honors Dr. King's legacy. Around the country services of all kinds are being planned including delivering meals, refurbishing schools and community centers, collecting food and clothing, signing up mentors, reading to children, promoting nonviolence, etc. Details can be found at - <https://www.facebook.com/mlkdaywilliamsport>

The MLK Day of Service shines a spotlight on service as a powerful force to bridge economic and social divides – today and throughout the year. In the words of Nelson Mandela we are reminded that “To be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.

Evening Community Discussion will be held at Penn College on Monday, January 20. Watch for details on place and time and plan to attend.

CHURCH NEWS

Looking for more ways to promote your church events? Email information to 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.

YOKEFELLOW PRISON MINISTRY

Rev. Danesta Whaley - 570-326-6868

North Central Regional Director

AND GOD SAID "LET THERE BE LIGHT"

....AND THERE WAS LIGHT! Gen. 1:3

Thank God for the light that shines in our hearts and that we can shine that light into the darkest areas of this world. JESUS is the Light of the World Dear Ones and HE has given us the privilege of being HIS 'Light bearers'.

This past week I spoke to one of our long-time volunteers who have gone into a local state prison for over 25 years. Next month in the newsletter, we will feature a testimony from him. However, I thought it would be good to give you just a glimpse of how the Light comes into many of the prisons week after week through men and women who have allowed the Lord to use them as 'Light bearers'. This is one story of many,

Volunteer, Dick has a talent for photography and photographs beautiful pictures of birds. His work and talent has inspired many people and also caught the eye of one special young inmate at another state facility. This inmate also has the gift of artistry in that he paints beautiful pictures inspired of the Lord on leaves. He happened to see some of Dick's photography work and received permission to use some of his pictures to paint from them. With the combination of both of these men's God-given talents, their work has inspired many within the walls of the prison as well as outside the walls. The Light of God's creations are penetrating into the darkness! Also, this young inmate, who happens to be a 'Lifer' is receiving NEW LIFE and seeing the abundance of God's grace in action as he reaches outside of himself to bring life and light to others.

Those who have the opportunity to go into the prisons get to witness firsthand God's radiant light week after week. But there is NO limit to what God can do through any will-

ing and yielded vessel to work through.

What a wonderful witness to God's beautiful light as we are in this blessed season of Advent and Christmas. Dear Ones, GO and be 'Light bearers' everywhere bringing God's Hope and Light to all.

EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Community Service Could Help Your Congregation: PA treatment and Healing has a community service program, run by Nancy Shires. This program has youths that have made a mistake and have to do community service to make amends. We like cleaning churches to do our CS, as of now we have 2 churches we clean every week and 1 we clean once a month. We are looking to help more churches. If you would like to have some help, please contact Nancy Shires at 570-772-6442.

They also have a handyman program that teaches the youths different tools and projects. This is mostly for the elderly. If you have something like a shelf or a ramp that you need built and you are in need of help please call Nancy Shires at 570-772-6442. We furnish the labor and you furnish the material.

Winter Coats Needed: The West End Christian Community Center (WECCC) is badly in need of winter coats of all sizes. People are asking for them and we have sold out already, and winter has just begun! Thank you so much. God bless you for your time and talents. He is proud of you for using them. WECCC is at 901 Newberry Street (the corner of Newberry Street and West Fourth Street, and donations may be brought there Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 9-2, Wednesday, 9-Noon and 4:30 - 7, Saturday 8:30 - Noon.

Why Wait Until The New Year To Resolve To Be A New You? There are classes available at Liberty House to help you learn new things. This month topics include; responsible renters, career empowerment, wellness, team building, Amerihealth, bullying, nutrition and financial empowerment. Women interested in attending a class, only need to call 322.4637, ext 112, for more information as to date and time, and to let them know they are coming.

American Cancer Society has free wigs, hats and turbans available to women who have lost their hair through cancer treatment. All items are new and are available at the local office 1948 East Third Street, Williamsport. For more information call 1-800-227-2345. You can also volunteer to sew Chemo Hats. For patterns and more information use the number above.

2014 RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS / HOLIDAYS CALENDAR

This listing, though selective and incomplete, highlights religious feasts, festivals and other observances. It is offered with the hope that awareness will be fostered special days celebrated by other Christian Traditions and some celebrations of other Faiths present in our community.

KEY: (PC) Protestant Christians, (RC) Roman Catholic Christians, (OC) Orthodox Christians, (C) Christians [All], (E) Ecumenical. Other religions in our area - (M) Muslim, (J) Judaism (I) Interfaith (N) National

| JANUARY | FEBRUARY | MARCH |
|--|--|---|
| 1 - New Year's Day -- | 2 - Meeting of Christ in the Temple OC | 2 - Transfiguration C |
| 6 - Epiphany/Theophony C | 2 - Souper Bowl Sunday E | 3 - Great Lent (Triodion) Begins OC |
| 12 - Baptism of Jesus C | 2 - Four Chaplains Sunday C+J | 2 - Pre Lenten Service E |
| 18-20 - Martin Luther King Holiday I | 16-22 Brotherhood/Sisterhood Week I | 4 - Shrove Tuesday C |
| 18- Day of Service (Lycoming College) | | 5 - Ash Wednesday C |
| 20 -Discussion Event (Penn College) | | 7 - World Day of Prayer (CWU) E |
| 18-25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity E | | 16 - Purim J |
| | | 17 - St. Patrick's Day C |
| | | 25 - Annunciation of Virgin Mary RC |
| APRIL | MAY | JUNE |
| 12 - Lazarus Saturday OC | 1 - National Day of Prayer I-USA | 4-5 - Shavuot J |
| 13 - Palm Sunday C | 2 - May Friendship Day (CWU) E | 8 - Pentecost C |
| 15-22 - Passover (Pesach) J | 27 - Lailat al Miraj M | 15 - Trinity Sunday PC+RC |
| 17 - Mayndy Thursday C | 29 - Ascension C | 15 - United Churches Sunday E |
| 18 - Good (Holy) Friday C | | 14 - Lailat al Bara'ah M |
| 20 - Easter (Pascha) C | | 15 - All Saints Day OC |
| 27 - Yom Ha Sho'ah J | | 28 - Ramadan expected to Begin M |
| JULY | AUGUST | SEPTEMBER |
| 4 - Independence Day N | 5 - Tish B'Av J | 24-26 - Rosh Hashanah J |
| 29-31- Eid al Fitr - Ramadan Ends M | 6 - Transfiguration OC | 6 - Birth of the Virgin Mary C |
| | 15 Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary RC+OC | 14 - Holy Cross Day RC+OC |
| OCTOBER | NOVEMBER | DECEMBER |
| 4 - Yom Kippur J | 1 - All Saints Day PC+RC | 1 - World AIDS Day I |
| 4 - Saint Francis Day RC | 7 - World Community Day Pgm E | 6 - St. Nicholas Day OC |
| 4-7 - Hajj Ends - Eid al Adha M | 23 - Christ the King PC+RC | 8 - Immaculate Conception of Blessed Virgin Mary RC |
| 5 - World Communion Sunday E | 9 - Stewardship Sunday E | 17-24 - Chanukkah J |
| 9-15 Sukkot J | 15 - Advent Begins (Winter Lent) OC | 21 - Last Sunday of Advent C |
| 12 - Laity Sunday E | 21 - Entry of the Theotokos OC | 25 - Christmas C |
| 12 - CROP Walk I | 27 - Thanksgiving I - USA | 31 - Watch Night C |
| 25 - Hijra - New Year M | 30 - Advent Begins RC+PC | |

NOTE: Celebrations of the Jewish holydays begin at sundown of the preceding day, and end at sundown on the holyday.