

UNITED CHURCHES' NEWS

Published Monthly by the

United Churches of Lycoming County

202 East Third Street, Williamsport PA 17701

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Rev. Gwen N. Bernstine, Executive Director and Editor

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

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VOLUNTEER NOW FOR 2010 MINISTRIES*

We are getting ready to fill the ministries schedule for 2010. Clergy and laity are needed:

Nursing Home and Assisted Living Center Worship:

Sundays at 2 weekly:

Manor Care South 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, Elmcroft

Wednesdays at 10 weekly - Sycamore Manor

Thursdays at 11 weekly - Presbyterian Home

2:30 weekly - Rose View Center

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 professional para church leaders are invited to sign up for a week's turn at the editorials in the Saturday Sun Gazette.

Please call contact us at uclc@sunlink.net or 322-1110 to learn more about these ministries and how you can be part of them. We need you!

*The Staff, Officers
and Board Members
of United Churches
hope that you
and those for whom you pray
experience many blessings
this Advent and
Christmas season.*



*May we all be open to receive anew
the message of hope the angels brought us
that directs us now and every day of the year
"Peace on Earth, good will to all."*

E-Mail Newsletter: Our United Churches News is now available via e-mail. If you'd like to receive your newsletter this way, please contact Gwen at uclc@sunlink.net.

Visit us at the following web site - www.uclc.org

WEDNESDAY ECUMENICAL LUNCHES*

Join us from 12 to 1 p.m. and you are always assured of a tasty \$4 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 p.m. No reservations are necessary. (Call Gwen at 419-1464 to check for snow cancellation.)

DECEMBER:

- 9 - **Colonel Sam Astin**, Officer in Charge, American Rescue Workers, *"Those Christmas Chimneys"*
- 16 - **Revs. R. Kenneth Weiss & Gwen Bernstine**, Pastor, First Church of Christ Disciples & Dir. United Churches, *"Zachariah and Elizabeth Remember"*
- 23 - **"Name that Christmas Song...and let's sing it too"** by *Revs. Aden Wertz, Kevin Brophy, & Gwen Bernstine*, of the planning committee.
- 30 - **Happy Holidays - No Lunch Scheduled**

JANUARY:

- 6 - **Mrs. Chris Smith, CPS**, Highway Traffic Specialist, *"Sharing the Road Bingo"*
- 13 - **Rev. Ted Corcelius**, Pastor, Christ U.M. Church, Hughesville, *"Making Health Care Choices - Sharing the Gifts of Love and Peace"*
- 20 - **Rev. Maurice Frontz**, Pastor, Messiah Lutheran Church and President, United Churches, *"Singing Our Faith Together: A Message for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity"*
- 27 - **Mrs. Rita Spangler**, Vice President of Facility Development, Susquehanna Health System, *"Project 2012 Update"*

This is a ministry that everyone in our congregations and community is welcome to participate in. Make plans to join us and you're welcome to bring a friend!

DIAL - A - DEVOTION *

Have you called yet?

The number is 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:

12/7-13 - Rev. Gwen Bernstine 12/14-20 - Rev. Danesta Whaley

12/21-27 - Fr. Dan Kovalak 12/28-1/3 - Ms. Nan Porter

1/4-10 - Rev. Jeff Zetto

Listen today and tell others about this ministry!

CAMPUS MINISTRY *

Sharon Comini, Coordinator,

Contact at: 419-5376 or ucm@uclc.org

It has been a very busy semester for all of the students at Penn College. We've had some great talks from the pastors this semester at our Monday night Faith Talks.

Wednesday night dinners have been delicious. We appreciate all the support and leadership you have given us. We are very thankful for Pastor Paul Doriani and the music he has provided for our worship services. The end of the semester is upon us already, and the students are getting ready for finals. We were able to pass out almost 100 study bags for the students. Thanks to those churches that had provided them.

We would like to thank Detlef for opening up his home for our annual Christmas Party. We all had a great time. Peggy, the soup was terrific. Congratulations to Chris and Meghan on your recent engagement. God's blessings to both of you.

United Campus Ministry is an important part of the students' life while they are at Penn College. They look forward to the Faith Talks and Wednesday evening worship. It helps keep them connected to their faith.

Mission Trips are a big part of our ministry and something the students look forward to each year. In the past we have gone to Washington D.C., New York City, and Pittsburgh. In Spring, 2010, we will be traveling to West Virginia to work with the West Virginia Presbytery in their Advocacy and Work Camps Ministry. We will be helping to rebuild homes. We hope to serve and bring hope to families that have experienced severe flooding damage in recent years. We are currently in the process of planning for our trip and raising awareness and support of it. Please consider supporting us through your prayers, and if you are able, with a financial gift as well. If you would like to make a donation to help fund our trip, Please send it to United Churches of Lycoming County, 202 E. Third Street, Williamsport, PA 17701 (please put UCM mission trip in the memo.)

Our annual **Lasagna Dinner will be held on Wednesday, February 10** at St. Paul Calvary United Methodist Church. All proceeds from this dinner will benefit our mission trip as well.

From all of the students at United Campus Ministry, we wish you all a very Merry Christ-filled Christmas and many blessings in the New Year.

SHEPHERD OF THE STREETS*

J. Morris Smith, Th. D.,
Contact at: 322-8568

In a few days we will celebrate the coming of the Savior, the birth of the Christ. I have found that a great way to contemplate the meaning of the birth of Jesus is to scrutinize my thoughts and emotions concerning the event that will take place at the end time...when the earth and sky will be rolled up as a scroll, and the Son of Man will come in the clouds with great glory and power and gather His elect from the earth and the sky.

The scriptures speaks of the Day of the Lord, called the Parousia, the Second Coming, the Second Advent, the end of time, the Judgment Day. What emotion rises in the heart when we speak of it, sing of it, think on it? The early church had an expression that they would shout...Ma-ra-na-THA! It means: "Lord Jesus COME!" They were looking for Him, they were hastening the Day of the Lord.

St. John wrote to a Christian Community as it neared the second century: *"And now, children, remain in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not be put to shame by him at his coming."* There is wonder and anticipation in this... there is a yearning for the completion of great design of God...when we will look upon His face. Because of the wonder...because of the anticipation...there is a diligence that forms an expectation.

In the days preceding the birth of Jesus, there was an expectation of the Messiah and every generation looked for His coming. So we should be a vigilant in anticipating the second coming. The early church lived on the cutting edge of that expectation and when the judgment of God was mentioned, it did not strike fear in the hearts of the people. It brought scenes of glory, laud, and honor.

What a glory it will be, when He comes to collect those who love Him. *"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.*

He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who blessed of my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, sick and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me. Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to

you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me."

You no doubt recognize these as the words of Jesus. It is the only disclosure in all of Sacred Scripture of what the judgment will be. There are many scriptures that announce the judgment, but only with these words does Jesus describe it. It is evident that love, benevolence, and mercy, especially for the poor, are preparations for the coming King.

The old English word for love is "charity"...to do works of charity was to do works of love. No wonder that in today's English the word "charity" is used for works of mercy and benevolence...for doing charity.

In the history of the church when traditions were developing around the celebrations of holy days, giving to the poor became part of the celebration. St. Nicholas, the pattern for the modern Santa Claus, was noted for giving to the poor. It was only natural that his legend got attached to Christmas. It is not odd that giving to the least among us is attached to the coming of the Savior and that giving to the least among us is the standard of the judgment that will be imposed on all us when the Son of Man comes in His glory. **MARANATHA! LORD JESUS COME!**

SPECIAL EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES *

Christmas Service in German: St. Michael's will again have a Christmas Service in German language on Saturday, December 12, 7:00 PM. The familiar Christmas story will be read in German and good old German Christmas carols will be sung. St. Michael's is located off Route 973 West in the Village of Quiggville.

March For Life: Please join the March for Life in Washington, D.C. on January 22, 2010. The Susquehanna Valley Chapter of PA for Human Life has reserved buses again for this grassroots event. To reserve your seat, or for more information, contact Carol Ann Stein at 570-584-2947 or Donna Thomas at 570-321-7476. Buses will be leaving from Beiter's in Williamsport and Big Lots in Muncy. The cost is \$15 per person. We hope you will join us!

POVERTY - A FAITH-BASED RESPONSE*

from our Christian Social Concerns Committee

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John 1:1) Many of us will hear these words on Christmas morning. What do they really mean to us? How does our understanding challenge and inspire us to provide charity and advocate for justice for those experiencing hunger and poverty?

Lycoming County Unemployment Rate Remains High

The preliminary rate of unemployment for Lycoming County (Williamsport Metropolitan Statistical Area) for October 2009 was 9.2%. This percentage was 3.5% higher than a year earlier.

Extreme Signs of the Time: In 2008, 7% of Pennsylvania’s children under the age of 18 lived in families with incomes under 50% of the federal poverty level

- In 2009, 11% of Lycoming County’s residents need and use Food Stamps. (An increase of 17% over 2007)
- In 2009, 22% of Lycoming County children live in families needing and using Food Stamps.

Today, the numbers coming to food pantries and other programs helping those in need are up dramatically from even the beginning of the year.

What do the numbers mean? 11% of county residents needing and using Food Stamps – how many is that? The number based on current population statistics is 12,834 persons (double the population of South Williamsport) or slightly more than one in ten. So when driving a car, shopping in a store, attending church, or being part of any gathering, try counting off every tenth person. Look in the face of the person and see Jesus. “...and the Word was God.”

Reducing Poverty in America Also Key to Curbing Hunger:

A durable end to hunger depends on a broader effort to reduce poverty in America. The best solution to hunger is a decent job. When poor people are asked what they most need, they ask for a stable, well-paying job or an educational opportunity that will lead to a good job. Many people make tremendous efforts to gain employment. However, people cannot always find jobs, and many jobs pay too little to support a family. Helping people overcome poverty in America by finding jobs that pay a livable wage must be a part of any U.S. plan to end hunger. (Source: Bread for the World)

Advocating for Justice to End Poverty and Hunger: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John 1:1) What beginning will we initiate as individuals and collectively as people of faith during this Advent and Christmas season

to change the patterns that contribute to increasing numbers of people living with hunger and in poverty?

FOOD PANTRY *

Gail Burkhart, Coordinator 322-1657

Our United Churches Food Pantry provides a three day supply of food to many in need in our community. This November we helped 135 households, primarily new to our pantry (since most “regular” clients received Thanksgiving baskets). This included 234 adults, 127 children, and 57 elderly, totaling 418 people.

Thanksgiving was one of the best holidays I have personally had in many years. Once again I was privileged to Chair the Thanksgiving basket project for the Shepherd of the Streets. On this, the 11th year, [for me], I think we finally have it 'tweaked' to as near perfection as lowly humans can achieve. The volunteers were so willing and eager, many having been doing this for years, too.

But what I really wanted to share was the ***MIRACLE***. All day on Nov. 23, I'd look at the donated food and know, just know, that it wouldn't be enough for us to give supplemental food bags to all who had applied. Sure, folks would get the turkey and the 'fixins' but nothing extra. Hours and hours the workers and I fretted over this dilemma. As one of the daytime volunteers left, tears in her eyes, she said 'All I can think of is for us to pray some more' and pray we did, up until the time to pack bags. Very enthusiastically, the folks marched around the gym at The Center, following our menus, and packed bags. As the night wore on, I slowly began to realize that we just might make it. The most intense feeling overcame me and a joy seemed to fill the air and then, the reality. He had overcome our unbelief and communed in such a personal way with each of us, showing His enduring and all encompassing love. We made it...all because of God and those who love and serve Him! Alleluia!

So, too, do the volunteers at the Food Pantry serve and honor God daily by reaching out to folks as they come to seek sustenance for their families or themselves. In each face we see, if only we would look a little more carefully, we are sure to see His beloved countenance.

This is the time of miracles and magic and I know, without qualm, after the Miracle of the Thanksgiving baskets that God will move in ways that will help us keep our friends from hunger. God will see that the devoted faithful will continue to support our efforts and provide when the need is greatest. For your part in that, thank you.

From all of us at the pantry: Have a blessed homecoming with the Infant Jesus this Christmas. May you and your families be blessed with love, and peace, and safety into the New Year and beyond.

CREATION CORNER

from our Christian Social Concerns Committee
**Resources for Understanding More
 About Natural Gas Well Drilling in the
 Marcellus Shale**

Here in northern Appalachia we are beset by environmental concerns, from the global climate changes, to national fossil fuel dependence; from multi-state efforts to clean up the Chesapeake Bay to Pennsylvania efforts to enact regulations covering outdoor wood furnaces and set renewable energy standards for electricity generation. Regionally some waterways are threatened and municipalities continue to allow backyard burner barrel burning.

Drilling for natural gas, a fossil fuel, in the Marcellus Shale is a topic here that has brought forth many considerations. The column this month points to Internet web resources that hopefully will help readers to come to a thoughtful understanding of all the issues involved. Resources include those from various sectors: academic; industrial and corporate; governmental; environmental advocacy; grass-roots groups; media; etc.

The point-of-view from the religious/ecumenical/ inter-faith sector is as yet undeveloped (specific to Marcellus shale gas well drilling), so Christians must make the best use of secular sources to help clarify, in their own minds, what is happening in our region, as they apply their ethical earth stewardship principles to the concern of fossil fuel exploitation. Only the effort of Damascus Citizens (see below) makes any reference to Biblical inspiration.

Academic Resources:

- *Wikipedia* can be searched for information about the geology of the Marcellus Shale and natural gas.
- *The Penn State University Cooperative Extension* provides gas well leasing information for landowners. <http://naturalgas.extension.psu.edu>
- *Lock Haven University of PA's on-line journal, "The Hemlock"*, devoted space to Marcellus shale drilling. www.lhup.edu/rmyers3/Hemlock/HemlockPastIssues.htm

Industrial and Corporate Resources

- www.newnaturalgas.org National gas industry advertising campaign
- Marcellus Shale Coalition www.pamarcellus.com
- Independent Oil & Gas Assoc. of PA www.iogapa.org
- Independent Gas Assoc. of NY www.marcellusfacts.com/blog
- *Also see the web sites of corporations* doing the drilling regionally (viz., Chief Oil and Gas, Chesapeake Energy Corp., Range Resources Corp., Cabot Oil and Gas Corp., Anadarko Petroleum, Ultra Resources, Inc., Fortuna Energy Inc., Rice Energy LP, East Resources, XTO Energy, etc.)

Governmental

- *PA Department of Environmental Protection* is the obvious site to search first. www.dep.state.pa.us keyword oil and gas wells. It contains a list of the largest oil and gas well operators in the state with 100 or more active wells (211 names = 98,884 sites). Or <http://www.dep.state.pa.us/dep/deputate/mines/oilgas>
- Also see the web sites for *other PA agencies* involved, such as the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources; Agriculture; Community and Economic Development; the Delaware River Basin Commission; the Susquehanna River Basin Commission, etc.
- *The Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center* notes that over 70% of Marcellus shale wells will be subject to 3.07% personal income tax (PIT), not the corporate net income tax (CNIT). www.pennbpc.org .

Environmental Advocates

- *Community Environmental Legal Defense Foundation* is a PA-based legal service. www.celdf.org .
- *PA Land Trust Association*, composed of 90 organizations. Home page says "drilling has consequences" and it urges taxes on natural gas to protect our resources. Notes impacts of drilling on air and land; includes site photos in state forests. Many, many links. www.landandwater.org .
- *Penn Future* urged, without success, a gas drilling severance tax. That special campaign will continue, supported by 100 businesses, environmental and conservation organizations listed on their web site, along with a history of drilling, economic and environmental issues, links to other resources, etc. www.pennfuture.org .
- *Chesapeake Bay Foundation* is currently challenging certain PA DEP gas permits (e.g., questioning buffer zones, fracking fluid composition disclosure and disposal). Their web site includes reportage on a New York State 800-page document of statements on Marcellus Shale environmental impacts. www.cbf.org
- *Earthjustice*, formerly the Sierra Club Defense Fund, currently is involved in a gas water drilling case (Monongahela River) with central PA implications. www.earthjustice.org .

Grass-roots Groups

- *Damascus Citizens for Sustainability* derives its name from Acts 22:10. "I asked, 'What am I to do, Lord?' The Lord said to me, 'Get up and go to Damascus; there you will be told everything that has been assigned to you to do.'" A 501c-3 not-for-profit corporation devoted to protecting our watersheds. Includes recent press releases, documents. It is aided by environmental lawyers and public health experts. www.damascuscitizens.org
 -look for more resources next month

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Spiritual Care Winter/Spring 2010 Course Offerings

Geisinger Medical Center, Danville (570-271-3700)

Spiritual Care classes will be offered in March, April, May and June at Geisinger. Below is the listing of classes. For dates and times and registration information contact our United Churches office for the complete listing at 322-1110 or uclc@sunlink.net.

Science and Religion Series

Quantum Theology - Spirituality and the New Physics
What Happens at Death - Brain Mind & Consciousness

Research Workshop Series

Moral Distress in Healthcare Providers

Care-Giving Series

Art of Caring Conservation - Level 1, Level 2
Listening (or Art of Caring Conversation Level 3)
Healing Presence (or Art of Caring Conversation Level 4)

No One Dies Alone (NODA) Series

NODA Volunteer Orientation
NODA Support Group

Jewish Studies Series

Jewish Ethics
The Autobiography of God
God Then and Now

Buddhist Studies Series

No Self, No Problem
Emptiness
For Marks of a Buddhist Practice
Bodhisattva Forum

Spirituality in Fiction Series

The Autobiography of God (also under Jewish Studies)
The Fifth Sacred Thing (also under Native American St)

Native American Studies Series

The Fifth Sacred Thing

ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH RELATIONSHIPS IN OUR WORLD TODAY

The Parliament of the World's Religions is meeting this week, December 3-10, 2009. Since 1993, a Parliament of the World's Religions has convened every five years in a major international city (Chicago 1993, Cape Town 1999, Barcelona 2004). Sponsored by the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, this year it is taking place in Melbourne, Australia.

A multi-religious, multi-lingual, and multicultural city, Melbourne offers an ideal location for the 2009 Parliament. Culturally vibrant and global in vision, Melbourne and Victoria are home to indigenous and Aboriginal spiritualities as well as the major world religions - Baha'i, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism among others. Over 10,000 participants

will come to Melbourne for the Parliament. The 2009 Parliament will turn worldwide attention to Melbourne as a destination city with international appeal.

The Parliament will have approximately 450 events including keynote addresses, seminars, conferences, debates, performances, concerts and exhibitions. Parliament participants will work with others and within their own traditions to craft faithful responses to:

- indigenous reconciliation
- global poverty and global warming
- environmental care and degradation
- education of the young and the challenges of social disengagement
- voluntary and forced migration
- artistic expression and spirituality and the value of sports

In today's world, understanding between people of different traditions is not optional. It is essential. The 2009 Parliament will give people of faith, spirit and goodwill new reason to say that peace is still possible.

Colleague Now President of NCCC: The Rev. Peg Chamberlin, executive director of the Minnesota Council of Churches, (Yes - our beloved Alton Motter was the executive director there many years ago. Peg has been there for 14 years now.) was installed as President of the National Council of Churches on November 12, in a public service at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral in Minneapolis. Peg Chamberlin is the 25th president of the National Council of Churches since 1950. She is the second Moravian, the fourth woman, the first Minnesotan and the first head of a state council of churches to hold the office.

The installation featured a sermon by the Rev. Dr. James Forbes, Jr., the nationally known president of the Healing of the Nations Foundation and former pastor of the Riverside Church in Manhattan.

In 2009, Peg was appointed to President Obama's Advisory Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships where she serves on the task force focused on economic recovery and fighting poverty.

"The National Council of Churches will be blessed by the leadership of the Rev. Peg Chamberlin, a woman whose very soul is filled with ecumenical passion and whose adult life has been invested in building bridges and relationship within the Christian Church, and in interfaith circles, as well," said The Rt. Rev. James L. Jelinek, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota and former president of the board for the Minnesota Council of Churches. "She is both a professional and a volunteer, with the gift of leadership and the gift of inspiration."

YOKEFELLOW NEWS

Evadna Cline, Director, Yokefellow Center - 326-6868

Robert Dodd writing in the 2009 ADVENT A calendar of Devotions poses a very interesting question: What do you think the world would be like if Jesus had never been born?

I have been thinking about this question and would like to offer a few of my thoughts:

- Infants would be abandoned or killed if they were female, unwanted, or less than perfect.
- Many of the happenings we have been hearing about in the news would be everyday occurrences.
- Just as many in third world countries live in fear every day and totally without hope, all of us would probably not even have a reason to live!
- The poor would be neglected, the homeless would be filling the street every day with dying bodies.
- Crime on the streets and even in our homes would be uncontrolled and no one would care because there would be little knowledge of right from wrong.
- There would be no forgiveness for personal violations; In fact love would probably not even be a word we would know or understand.
- Institutions such as hospitals, Churches, Christian schools, maybe even secular schools would not exist.
- All hope for the future would be non-existent.
- Life beyond life on this earth would not be a goal for anyone.
- Without Jesus' birth, there would be no Christmas, no holiday season for a vacation from our day-to-day drudgery. We wouldn't have anything of any real significance to celebrate at this time of year.

I praise God that God sent His only Son to earth that all who would believe in Him would not perish but rather would have eternal life!

Though our world is far from perfect, because Jesus came to our world, we do have hope every day that the message of God's love is available for all of us.

The holidays are one of the most difficult times of the year for those who are incarcerated. Those of us on the outside of the razor wire fortresses have no idea what sadness the men and women suffer as they are separated from loving families and friends. One of the activities that Yokefellow Prison Ministry engages in is a project I call 'Christmas Cards for Prisoners'. Children from area churches are invited to opportunity picture with a message of hope and peace for distribution in the prisons.

Nearly 1,000 are distributed in Clinton County, Tioga County, Columbia County, and Coal Township State Correctional Institution. We have received letters of apprecia-

tion from inmates in these institutions telling us of the impact those drawings by the children have made in the lives of the inmates, many of whom are abandoned by family and friends. Children sign only their first name and their age so there is no security problem. I would guess that these cards from the children may be the only Christmas cards many inmates receive. I invite you to pray during this month for the inmates, their families, the correctional officers, and staff that their hearts will be open to the message of love. I give thanks to God that Jesus' life here on earth does make a difference in our world. Yes, our world is not perfect, we are sinful, flawed individuals in need of God's redeeming love and because of Christmas, that love and forgiveness is available to us. And, this grace is as much available to the men and women who are, or have been incarcerated. We can go about our duties and our lives singing the wonderful song, "Go Tell it on the Mountain".

Please call me at 326-6868 with any questions or to volunteer to invite Jesus to 'Spare us from temptation, for us and our salvation He died upon the cross. Jesus came to invade our lives and wishes to share repentance with all who mourn their sins. He comes to give our lives direction, to speak the vital sentence with which good news begins. Love was born at Christmas, love divine. Worship we our Jesus, love shall be our token. Wishing God's abundant love for you and all humankind.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

The holidays can be a busy time, and it's easy to lose yourself in thoughts while you're traveling in the car.

Taking a few safety precautions will help to ensure a safe, ticket-free holiday season.

- Obey posted speed limits and traffic laws.
- Adapt your driving to weather conditions.
- Keep an eye out for aggressive drivers in high-traffic areas and resist the temptation to drive aggressively yourself.
- Keep your eyes on the road and off your phone.
- Never drink and drive.
- Always wear your seat belt. Click It or Ticket.

Happy Holidays from the Community Traffic Safety Project and Drive Safe PA.

For more traffic safety information, please visit us at www.DriveSafePA.org.

SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY

Souper Bowl Sunday is one way to help our United Churches food pantry, or other Ministries who help people in these difficult times. The date this year is February 7, 2010. To join this effort to help the least of these by bringing in non-perishable food or funds contact them at 1-800-358-7687 or www:souperbowl.org.

2010 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	5 - World Day of Prayer E
6 - Epiphany/Theophony C	7 - Souper Bowl Sunday E	25 - Annunciation of Virgin Mary RC
10 - Baptism of Jesus C	7 - Four Chaplains Sunday C+J	28 - Palm Sunday C
18-25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity E	14 - Transfiguration C	30 - Passover (Pesach) Begins J
18 Martin Luther King Holiday E	14 ? Ecumenical Pre-Lenten Service C	
	15 - Great Lent Begins OC	
	15-21 Brotherhood/Sisterhood Week I	
	17 - Ash Wednesday C	
APRIL	MAY	JUNE
1 - Maundy Thursday C	6 - National Day of Prayer I	3 - Corpus Christi RC
2 - Good (Holy) Friday C	7 - May Friendship Day CWU E	
4 - Easter C	13 - Ascension of Christ C	
5 - Passover (Pesach) ends J	19 - Shavout J	
11 - Yom HaSho'ah J	23 - Pentecost C	
	30 - United Churches Sunday (Trinity Sun) C	
	30 - All Saints Day OC	
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
4 - Independence Day N	6 - Transfiguration C	2 - Ramadan expected to begin M
20 - Tish B'Av J	11 - Ramadan Begins M	8 - Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary RC+OC
	15 Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary RC+OC	9-10 - Rosh Hashanah J
		10 - Eid al Fitr - Ramadan Ends M
		14 - Holy Cross Day RC+OC
		18 - Yom Kippur J
		23-29 - Sukkot J
OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
4 - World Communion Sunday E	1 - All Saints Day PC+RC	1 - World AIDS Day I
10 - Laity Sunday E	5 - World Community Day Pgm E	2-9 - Chanukkah J
10 - CROP Walk for most walks PC+OC	7 - Stewardship Sunday E	6 - St. Nicholas Day OC
	8-10 - PA Pastors Conference E	8 - Immaculate Conception of Blessed Virgin Mary RC
	15 - Advent Begins OC	19 - Last Sunday of Advent C
	15 - Hijj - New Year M	25 - Christmas C
	21 - Christ the King PC+RC	26-1/1 - Kwanzaa --
	21 - Entry of the Theotokos OC	28 - The Holy Innocents C
	25 - Thanksgiving N	31 - Watch Night C
	28 - Advent Begins RC+PC	

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