



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 1

JANUARY 8, 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.

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF ECUMENICAL VISION

This year is the 50th Anniversary of Vatican II. Dr. Alton Motter, our executive director of United Churches and friend counted attended the Vatican II Council in Rome, both as an official Protestant observer and as a journalist, one of his career highlights. He said "The council, which concluded in 1965, raised a curtain separating Roman Catholics from Protestants.

There are number of opportunities to celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and the Fiftieth Anniversary of Vatican II...

1/18-25 - ***Special Devotions*** for each day will be available on our Telephone Devotion Line, reachable 24 hours a day at 322-5762.

1/23 and 30 - Both ***Ecumenical Lunch*** programs at Noon at Pine Street United Methodist Church, 441 Pine Street. The first week we'll hear from a priest in the area who was in Rome during Vatican II. The second week we will hear reflections from some of those who watched and listened from here. We look forward to joining them for lunch (\$6) and these programs. If you are not a regular attender please contact us at 322-1110 or director@uclc.org to help us prepare.

1/24 - ***Service of Prayer at Holy Cross Orthodox Church***, 1725 Holy Cross Lane (Next to St. Ann's Catholic Church on Northway Rd. and Sheridan St.) Thursday at 7:00 p.m. All are invited to attend. A fellowship time follows.

31st ANNUAL ECUMENICAL PRE-LENTEN SERVICE

7:30 p.m. Sunday, February 10, 2013

at

Saint Joseph The Worker Parish (Annunciation Church)
West Fourth and Walnut Streets, Williamsport
Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Vatican II



Speaker:

The Rev. Dr. John Charnock,
Director of Pastoral Care,
Susquehanna Health System
United Methodist Pastor

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

A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dream and You:
When: Monday - January 21 - 6 - 7:30 p.m.
Where: Penn College: Penn's Inn, Bush Campus Ctr

This is a new kind of community conversation on the topic of race related to the teachings of Martin Luther King, Jr. The dialogue will be facilitated in small group conversations among individuals who have a variety of perspectives and life experiences. This will be a conversation and an opportunity to listen.

Everyone who attends will have an opportunity to participate in an honest dialogue about ideas and points of view. Groups will rotate. Each group will have a moderator and we will address:

- The values and life experiences that have influenced your perceptions on race.
- What you appreciate about being part of the Williamsport community.
- How we can make the community stronger & healthier.

RSVP by 1/14/13 to Kathy Metzger: 570-322-4637 or kmetzger@ywcawilliamsport.org.

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, but a call to Gwen, Office-322-1110 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! (Listen to WRAK or call Gwen at 419-1464 to check for snow cancellation.)

JANUARY:

- 9- **Rev. Kenton Hunt**, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief, *"On the Ground in New York: Hurricane Sandy Recovery Difficult"*
- 16- **Pastor Dorothy Anderson**, Co-Pastor, Love-Unlimited, *"Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr."*
- 23- **The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**, *"Vatican II: I was there in Rome"*
- 30- **The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity - continued**, *"Vatican II: I was here in Lycoming County"* Panel members will include: **Mrs. Sally Grieco, Mr. Dan Doyle, and Fr. Glenn McCreary.**

FEBRUARY

- 6- **Rev. Ken Elkin**, Pastor, St. Mark Lutheran Church Williamsport, *"Continuing the Pilgrimage, the Camino de Santiago"*
- 13- **Rev. Karen Atanasoff**, Pastor, Pine Street United

Methodist Church, *"Ash Wednesday Service and Imposition of Ashes"*

20- To be announced.

27- **Mrs. Sandra Grier**, Along the Way Bookstore, *"Enjoyment with Every Turn of the Page"*

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!

CAMPUS MINISTRY *

Sharon Comini, Coordinator, ucm@uclc.org

As the students at Penn College head back to the classroom for a new semester, UCM will be starting the new year with the bible study "40 Days of Community" by Rick Warren. This Bible study will help us focus on serving our community as we prepare mentally and spiritually for our spring mission trip to New York City.

We will learn how to fulfill God's five purposes for our lives. According to Warren, from the beginning, God planned for you to fulfill his purposes in community with other people---people in your church family, small group, and in the world around you. We are hoping that the "40 Days of Community" bible study will deepen our understanding of how God uses others for our good and growth. It will also show us how God can use the students of UCM to bless others and cultivate deeper relationships with those around us.

We will be having our annual soup sale in the middle of February. Proceeds from the soup sale will help to defray the costs of our mission trip. Thank you for your prayers and support. May the Lord richly bless you in 2013.



**United Campus
Ministry**

***Soup Sale
Is coming!***

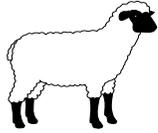
**February 15th-28th
\$5.00 per quart**

**We will have a variety of
homemade soups to keep you
warm on those cold winter days.**

**To order soup,
Call Sharon at
447-3491**



SHEPHERD OF THE STREETS*



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

SO WHAT?

The ancient Greeks named four cardinal virtues: justice, prudence, fortitude, and temperance. The church added three theological virtues: faith, hope, and love. The word “virtue” comes from the Latin word, *virtus*, and means manliness or worth. In order to accept life as a worthy thing, one would need to see value in these virtues in order to have a worthy value system and a high theology of man. This is best understood in words of God: *Let us make man in our own likeness and image.* So He made man in His Own likeness and image, and man, therefore, can be just, prudent, strong in patience and courage, and possess self-control. If he is virtuous he can be a person of faith, hope, and love.

Poverty can mean more than we usually mean it. We usually attribute the word “poor” to someone lacking in material means. But it is also used of someone lacking adequacy, productivity, or wholeness of mind or body or...virtue. Here might be a new word for you: impecunious. It applies to one in a habitual state of poverty that results from personal practices. I call it “shooting yourself in the foot” syndrome. There are many in poverty because of a lack of training, education, physical aptitude, mental capacity. But, there are just as many that are poor because of a lack of virtue and moral uprightness.

As so many are being raised without example, without wholesome guidance, without faith, hope, and love producing a minimal sense of what is just, prudent, fortuitous, temperate, faithful, hopeful, and loving. Even people not deemed to be materially poor, are poor in individual worth. If little value is seen in one’s own life, little value is seen in the lives of others.

Their minds become a playground for depression and discontent. Satan seeks such to destroy. They are ripe for hatred, selfishness, envy, sexual impurity, jealousy, rage, drugs, drunkenness, the abuse of passions and desires, indulgences of all kinds. Their life is devalued and the lives of all others are seen as no better. There is no greater poverty, no bleaker loneliness.

In the wake of misbehavior to mayhem, malcontent to massacres, perhaps we should look at what has come of our culture where, more and more, the fear of God is ridiculed, good is ignored, virtue is attacked, morality is scorned, faith is discredited, hope is misplaced, love is defined by human passions, quietness is filled with distractions, stillness is shunned, and worldliness sets the standards of conduct and success.

Where there is no vision, the people are demoralized. If one can only measure life by looking within themselves, there is no hope. When a society seeks only what they can get for themselves without thought to justice, prudence, for-

titude, temperance, faith, hope or love that society slips into apathy and disillusion. All in that frame of reference become the poorest of the poor.

Thank you for your support during the Christmas season. We were able to make many have a more enjoyable celebration. We thank you for your continued support of hygiene items, baby needs, bedding and blankets.

FLOOD RECOVERY: Call 570-322-7648

This can be you! We really need your help to get families back in their homes. We are working on **Saturday:**

January 26.

We will be doing inside cleaning, drywalling and painting, etc. All level of skills are needed! Call the Flood Hot Line at 322-7648 or United Churches office at 322-1110 with the number of volunteers and skill levels.

Volunteers will meet at New Covenant UCC, 202 E 3rd St., Williamsport at 8 a.m. Saturday to receive assignments. Everyone should wear sturdy shoes, bring work gloves, and a favorite tool bucket if you have one.

Congregations can select other dates to have your own workday. Call Phil/Gail Landers at 326-2337 for details.



SCHEDULES ARE OUT FOR 2013 MINISTRIES*

We have sent out the schedules for our ministries for this year. I want to thank each volunteer! It's a big job - over 800 services, 52 radio shows, 52 newspaper editorials, not to mention over 300 devotions for the telephone ministry! We can't do it without you.

There are a few slots still needing to be filled for the Worship Schedule. The other schedules are currently complete. However, throughout the year we always have vacancies that occur so we'd appreciate those who are willing to fill in or be on stand-by.

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



FOOD PANTRY *

Gail Burkhart, Coordinator 322-1657

E-mail - foodpantry@uclc.org

Happy New Year to us all!! May this year of 2013 be a blessed one for everyone [remember Y2K, the year 2000, when all were predicting the end of the world, snafu with all things electronic?]

Nothing will ever happen to us if not in God's timing. However dire things may seem, He is always in control and will watch over us in our every need.

The recent history with the Food Pantry proves that very effectively. Our move to The Center seemed to be the perfect home for us (and it was, at that time). Then the unforeseen, 'eviction' that led us to another search for a place to set our roots. Then St. Joseph the Worker Parish, specifically Fr. Brian and Jim Foran, came to call with the 'lifeline offer' to use space at The Castellano Center.

Now we embark on a new adventure in a new home and are excited about the possibilities existing in this environment. What we know for a certainty is that God is in control and will watch over us and direct our endeavors. The staff at the Pantry all believe this without a doubt. We know that our days will be filled with opportunities to serve Him as we interact with His children. Needing food is perhaps one of the most humbling experiences we go through. How difficult it is to admit to someone that we cannot provide adequately for ourselves and our families! Yet the gentle folk who staff the Pantry have a way of working with each individual so they feel comfortable, secure and, we hope, cared for. That comes from God's directing us in the ways to serve as His Hands on earth to care for and love all His people.

With that thought, we ask that you not only continue to

support us with your generous donations, but we need your constant prayers as well. We're mere mortals, unable to do any of this without help from you, our brothers and sisters. We all need to look to God for the compassion and empathy needed to do His work. Thank you for blessing us daily.

We also want to send special thanks to Rabbi Rappaport and the O'hev Shalom Congregation for the contribution of the Menorah, made of cans of food collected with the help of the community during Hanukkah. We are blessed by your caring and we appreciate your thoughts and aid.

As always, there are food items that are in short supply:

coffee/tea bags	powdered creamer (regular flavors)
hot chocolate	pasta sauce
cereal	powdered drink mix (ex: fruit punch)
canned fruits	canned veggies
canned tuna	hamburger helpers (any flavor)

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 3, 2013). 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 2012 the grand total generated was \$9,869,595.14 collected by 10,093 groups, helping 8,572 charities with the funds collected and at least 2,961,490 pounds of food. Be part of a modern day miracle by getting your church on board. For more information go to: www.souperbowl.org.

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:

1/7-13 Rev. Margaret Balliet 1/14-17, 26-27 Rev. Gwen Bernstine

1/18-25 The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

1/28-2/3 Pastors Jim/Kathy Behrens 2/4-10 Rev. Margaret Balliet

2/11/17 Mrs. Dorothy Wagner 2/18-24 Rev. Gwen Bernstine

Listen today and tell others about this ministry!

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

I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way. -Matt 15:32 Jesus had “compassion” for the crowd that had been with him for three days. He multiplied bread and fish to feed them. Families dealing with hunger and food insecurity are challenged in many ways and often juggle resources and alter priorities to provide food for themselves and especially for growing children. What miracles are we ready to initiate to support faith-based food resources such as local food kitchens and pantries? What changes in priorities in our economic and political realms will we call for out of Jesus’ sense of justice?

Homeless in Lycoming County: In November 2012, 137 persons were homeless according to local reporting agencies. Of this number 85 were children. Lycoming County had one of the highest rates of homelessness per capita in Pennsylvania.

Resolve to Make a Difference: Now is the time to assess what we have done as individuals, and congregations to make a difference in the lives of those experiencing homelessness, hunger, unemployment, and lack of a living wage. What will we do individually and collectively with others to make a difference by supporting some local outreach program and advocating for fairness in the workplace and in government policies and practices?

After the Fiscal Cliff – What’s Next? The legislation negotiated about taxes at the end of 2012 did nothing to secure the “social safety net.” Soon, those programs will almost certainly be targeted from cuts – especially SNAP (food stamps.) Now is the time to pray, become better informed, and express our concerns about protecting programs for the poor to our Congressional representatives and the President. There are a variety of faith-based groups that make getting involved easier than acting alone. Bread for the World is a long standing ecumenical advocacy group focused on eradicating hunger and poverty in our nation and the world. For more information visit www.bread.org.

Think and Act Holistically “I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way.” -Matt 15:32. Jesus’ concern at that moment was for the four thousand present with him. Jesus’ fundamental concern is for all people whether in our communities, state, nation, or the world. As people of faith we are called to be concerned about domestic and international programs that deal with hunger (charity) and promote economic development to benefit all (justice). Let us resolve to think and act locally, nationally, and globally in 2013.

HOMELESS IN LYCOMING COUNTY 2013: An unsheltered point-in-time count will take place in Lycoming County on Wednesday, January 30. The count will serve as a snapshot of the homeless situation on that particular day, highlighting individuals defined as unsheltered, i.e. sleeping in a location that is not meant for human habitation: vehicles, streets, parks, sidewalks, bus stops or stations, abandoned buildings, and tents. To report homeless people you encounter January 30th, for more information or to volunteer with the count, call Adrienne Wertz, Lycoming Cty. United Way, 323-9448 fdcb@lcuw.org.

CREATION CORNER*from our Christian Social Concerns Committee***Earth-Honoring Faith**

Does your religious tradition honor God's creation? How does your faith, translated into action, honor the earth? That seems to be the question addressed by Larry Rasmussen, of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in his **Earth-Honoring Faith: Religious Ethics in a New Key** (Oxford University Press, 2012), as described by Internet-sourced accounts of the new book.

The problems are well-known: "climate change, species extinction, the destruction of entire ecosystems, the urgent need for a more just economic order." As we consider the natural elements of air, water, sunlight, fire and earth, what religious resources can we use to transition ourselves "from an industrial-technological age obsessed with consumption to an ecological age restoring wise stewardship of all life"?

Perhaps what is needed from all faith traditions, is a common "spiritual/ecological ethic that accounts for the well-being of all creation." Practices of "mysticism, sacramentalism, prophetic acts, asceticism and the cultivation of wisdom" can "counter the consumerism, utilitarianism, alienation, oppression, and folly that push us to the brink."

Rasmussen’s effort is given rave reviews "a tour-de-force"; "eloquent, comprehensive, and compelling"; "a vision that is sorely needed"; "interdisciplinary thinking at its best"; "his scholarship is impeccable"; "showing that a paradigm shift to an ecologically conscious civilization is possible."

Rasmussen writes, in the "Prelude" to his book: "This is a work in religious ethics. Its burning questions are the questions of all ethics: How are we to live, and for what? What makes lives, any lives and all lives, go 'round well? What is good, right, and fitting? And while this book, as any book, can do precious little by itself, it belongs to those questions."

Such questions are deserving of consideration in our congregations, sermons, classrooms, homes, communities, corporate suites and halls of government.

EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE AREA

Newberry Branch of the NGA (National Needlework Guild of America) has provided 590 items this year to congregations and agencies affiliated with United Churches.

Coats, clothing, shoes and personal hygiene items can be requested for individuals in need. Other times items are donated for general distribution through Daniel's Closet, Shepherd of the Streets, and Expectations. Requests are taken at any time of the year by contacting Deb Buckman, dbuckman@pct.edu or (H) 323-1707, (W) 320-2400x3526.

Parish Nurses of the Williamsport area will meet at Christ Episcopal Church, corner of Mulberry and Fourth Streets, in Williamsport on Thursday, January 24 at 10 AM. All nurses interested in partnering with their pastors to help church members with health needs are welcome to attend.

Pancake Breakfast Benefit: Messiah Lutheran Church in South Williamsport will host a Pancake Breakfast to benefit the Sydney Knicely Kidney Donor Fund. Sydney is an 11-year-old girl who will be receiving a kidney from a live donor on January 7, 2013. Unfortunately, neither Sydney's insurance nor the donor's insurance will cover the cost of the donor's surgery, and there are, of course, the additional costs of lost wages, etc. while the donor recovers. Please join us in praying for both Sydney and her donor before and during the surgery and during the recovery time, and offer your support by attending the pancake breakfast. Saturday, February 9 from 8-11 a.m. Adults (age 10 and over): \$6, children under 10: \$3. Advance tickets may be purchased by contacting the church office at 326-9171 or by email at messiahoffice@comcast.net. Tickets will also be available at the door.

FREE Clothing Exchange at Messiah Lutheran Church, South Williamsport on Saturday, February 2, 2013 from 8-11 a.m. Bring what you can, take what you need. No money will change hands. Advance clothing donations will also be accepted. Please bring only those items that are in good repair and suitable to be worn.

Harvest School of Iris Ministries is in Sarasota Florida, but there is a local connection. Whitney Soars Bernan was the Director of Volunteer Services at Susquehanna Health for 27 years until retiring last June. Her son, Stephen Soars, and his wife, Cassandra, are missionaries with Iris Ministries. They are the administrators for The Harvest School which is modeled after the school in Africa (<http://www.irismin.org/missions/harvest/>). The Harvest school is a two month training to prepare God's

people for work in the midst of poverty and need. A few years ago they started vocational schools in Africa to train youth in culinary arts, hair care, pottery, woodworking, etc. so they can support themselves. For details Whitney can be reached at 570-435-4562.



IN CRISIS? KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS?
WE CAN HELP!!

SUICIDE PREVENTION

From anywhere call: 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)

Lycoming County Crisis Intervention: 570-326-7895

YOKEFELLOW PRISON MINISTRY

Rev. Danesta Whaley, Council Director - 326-6868

GIVING TO THE UNSEEN IN 2013 – Love in Action

My little children let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. -1 John 3:18

Blessings to you in this New Year! Are you anticipating great things the Lord will do this year in your life? Although you have not yet seen it, by faith we can know that our Lord is always working 'behind the scenes' enabling us to help bring about the next advance of the Kingdom. No matter where you work, go to church, mingle in with others, God is working with you and for you. Not just mere words, but in deed and truth. He exhorts us that we are to be doing the same with those we come in contact with in this world. When we see a need and we have the means, we are to address it. This is love in action.

Being a light and taking the love of the Lord each week into the prisons is one way of ministering to the 'unseen,' those who may be forgotten. The good news of the gospel is for all to hear and receive. The Lord not only laid down HIS life for you but for each one who will receive HIS un-failing love. There are approximately 2.3 million who are incarcerated and at least 95% of these men and women will be released back into society! You and I can make a difference in the lives of these 'unseen' ones. Whether it is by directly going into the prisons each week, writing letters, giving of our resources, partnering with others... the opportunities are endless.

Yokefellowship Prison Ministry is about 'loving in deed and in truth'. Call our office today to see how you might become involved with us.