

# 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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May 10, 2010



## UNITED CHURCHES SUNDAY \*

*Happy United Churches Sunday to us!  
Happy United Churches Sunday to us!  
What great ministry we do together!  
Happy United Churches Sunday to us!*

Please join us in celebrating United Churches Ministry on May 30, 2010. It is amazing to realize that United Churches Ministries reach well over 150,000 people every year throughout the county with six hard working staff and over 500 volunteers. These numbers include the work of our Shepherd of the Streets Program, Food Pantry, Fuel Bank, weekly Nursing Home and Prison Worship Services, weekly Footsteps to Follow column in the newspaper, weekly News and Views radio show, daily phone devotion line, ecumenical worship services, programs and seminars, campus ministry, collections for the hungry and needy in our world, and even this newsletter that you are reading!

Please join us throughout the year in celebrating these 64 years of ministry together in our county. There are endless possibilities, some of which include...

- Using our new brochures and envelopes to help your congregation be aware of and support United Churches. (They are available by contacting our office)

- Providing an additional donation to our United Churches budget this year - perhaps dedicating a fund raising event to provide additional support for this ministry we do together.
- Keeping our ministries in prayer and your 180 sister congregations who make our work possible.
- Volunteer sixty-four hours this year through United Churches (that's about 1 ¼ hours/week).
- Help your congregation provide 64 - bags of food, college study bags, CWS kits, or Shepherd hygiene items.
- Have 64 members of your congregation represented at United Churches events this year like... Ecumenical Lunch, Pre Lenten Service, Annual Assembly, Hunger Awareness, Church Women United, Seminars...
- Invite Gwen, Morris, Gail, or Sharon to come to your congregation to share about our ministry.

I am sure you can come up with additional ways you can celebrate our ecumenical life together.

**CLOSED FRIDAYS:** Please note that our United Churches and Shepherd Offices will be closed Fridays, beginning this June. This is a cost cutting measure to help our budget deficit. (See page 5)

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

**WEDNESDAY ECUMENICAL LUNCH \***

**J**oin us from 12 to 1 p.m. for the Wednesday Noon Ecumenical Lunch Program. Enjoy 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.

**MAY:**

- 12- **Mr. William Kieser**, Supervisor, Sanders Mortuary, **“General Information Your Family Needs”**
- 19- **Rev. Charles and Mrs. Marie Mercer**, American Baptists, and **Mr. Kifle Silomon**, **“The Journey of One Refugee From Ethiopia to Russia to the United States to ?”**
- 26- **Dr. Ellen Davis**, Director of Music at St. John’s Newberry United Methodist Church and Members of the Chancel Handbell Choir, **“Towers, Tolls, Tales”**

**JULY: SUMMER PICNIC**

- 14- **Rev. Aden Wertz**, Pastor, Pine Street United Methodist Church and **Rev. Gwen Bernstine**, Director, United Churches, **“Name That Hymn, and Other Games relating to Area Churches and Our Faith”**

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!

**POVERTY - A FAITH-BASED RESPONSE\***

*from our Christian Social Concerns Committee*

**B**ut the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.

*(John 14:16)* Pentecost is a time to focus on the guidance and energy given to us by the Holy Spirit. How is the Holy Spirit challenging us as a faith community to respond to those in need in our community and the world? What more should we be doing in charity and for justice?

**Local Unemployment Rate – New High for the County**

Lycoming County’s unemployment rate for March 2010 was 10.2%. The county has had double-digit unemployment since the beginning of the year.

**This Summer – Save Energy – Act Locally: Share Time,**

**Talent and/or Treasure:** Contact any one of the following programs that serve those experiencing hunger and poverty to volunteer and/or contribute. With the summer ahead, we have the opportunity to help re-create our local community.

American Rescue Workers 323-8401

ARW Love Center, Jersey Shore 398-1551

Antioch Church 323-2425

Central PA Food Bank 321-8023

Fairlawn Community Church, Cogan Station 494-0414

Footprints Food Pantry, Montgomery 547-1170

Meals on Wheels 323-3096

Salvation Army 326-9187

Share Discount Purchasing Program 322-5234

Shepherd of the Streets 322-6538

Sojourner Truth Ministry 323-1797

Son Light House, Muncy 546-3585

St. Anthony’s 326-2244

United Churches Food Pantry 322-1657

**What We Believe – God’s Concern for All Especially the Poor and Vulnerable:**

All of our sacred writings affirm that God consistently expresses concern for the well-being of all people, especially the poor and vulnerable. We believe that God has created a world of sufficiency for all, providing us daily and abundantly with all the necessities of life. All people deserve the opportunity to live lives of dignity and abundance. However, today there are pressing economic challenges facing many throughout this nation, especially those living in poverty, that require our collective attention, effort, and imagination. We raise our voices with and on behalf of those in need to advocate for an economy that serves everyone. Source: [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org)

**Aiding Those in Need: Principles to Guide Tax Policy Review and Reform This Summer:**

Congress is likely to begin to address the required review and renewal of the nation’s tax policies this summer. Aspects of this legislation such as the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit are vital ways to keeping low-income families out of poverty. It should be an objective of national tax policy to:

- Provide adequate income assistance and related services to working families and individuals
- Strengthen and expand programs that support low-income working parents with children
- Provide incentives to pursue and maintain employment and increase earnings
- Strengthen and expand programs that support workers’ efforts to develop their human capital, invest in their financial security, and achieve self-sufficiency
- Be made as simple as practicable so that taxpayers, tax administrators, and legislators can all understand the rules and confidently apply them or comply with them
- Raise adequate revenues to meet societal needs while supporting economic growth and job creation

## SHEPHERD OF THE STREETS\*

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

### IN THE SKIN OF THE POOR

**M**ost all who read this could not be poor. We have three things that sustain our way of life that the poor do not have, or have lost, or have rejected at some time or other. We have PEOPLE...family, friends, church, colleagues. These create an interchange of care. If my house were to burn down today, by nightfall I would have several offers to stay until arrangements could be made.

We have EDUCATION...we have been taught by caring people, both formally and by traditional training, caring discipline and the wisdom of God. In the process, most of us have developed some kind of skill which fits into the social and economic strata of living in a capitalistic society. We have CONNECTION and have accepted the fact that living in a human community takes a sense of justice, a willing spirit to conform to the mores and standards of human comportment.

For the poor these are not available. A capitalistic society judges by the standard of money. Lack of education, insufficient language and math skills, defective rationale, unguided compliance, lack of accommodation, ignorance of consequences due to unlearned rationale are the ways of the poor and places the poor in a class outside the accepted network used by the rest of the community.

The poor person is often raised in an atmosphere that produces the typical "poor person" who stands out in the crowd. If not raised that way, poor choices, disabilities, and rebellion have produced that outcome.

The poor person is often the object of blame, judged by appearance and performance to be lazy (not willing to improve himself), hazy (on drugs or alcohol), or crazy (mentally ill). The poor person is an exposed person...the way of life is obvious, very little privacy, frequenting places that feed and help only the poor. The poor person is deprived of the basics of social living: cleanliness, enough sleep, proper nutrition and is vulnerable to constant illness by weather and unsanitary living conditions. The poor person is restricted by the lack of choices (often the food from food pantries is low in vitality and high in starch and sugar), with no options or alternatives, (clothing is often pre-worn and "the latest thing" five years ago). The poor person is harassed: the first suspected by the law, distrusted in stores, disbelieved and must prove everything if applying for help, often evicted because of failure to pay the inflated price of rentals, subject to utility shut-off for failure to pay those inflated prices, too, always having to show their I.D. to get anything or anywhere. The poor person lives in an sense of rejection because of these things, but also because people distance themselves from them on the job (for theirs is often the lowest

and least enumerated), in public restrooms, in grocery stores, on the street, and, I hate to say it, in church.

The outcome of the life of the poor is a person who is angry in a world of alienation. Anger might show itself in aggressive ways, but most often in the way a poor person develops survival strategies: selfishness, denial, and callousness (the walls of defense for a broken spirit). Overtly this leaves a trail of lack of respect for person or property, inhibition that looks like belligerence, retarded human interaction, lack of desire, poor reasoning, and lack of integrity (survival strategies of dishonesty and misrepresentation).

To help the poor, therefore, one must be willing to step into this strange world, to give attention, to touch, to learn the language, smell the smells. That is the mandate of Jesus... to help the poor. When we do, we find that we are poor... poor in love, joy, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, which happens to be very fruit the Holy Spirit desires to produce in us (Galatians 5:22-23).

We so appreciate all you who step forward to help the poor by providing hygiene items, bedding, and baby needs. We appreciate the monetary contributions to fund our general budget to keep our ministry open, and the donations for discretionary and prescription funds. The list of hygiene items (which often are depleted in the summer) are:

regular sizes please...

- |                     |                                    |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>Deodorant</i>    | <i>Toothpaste and Toothbrushes</i> |
| <i>Soap</i>         | <i>Shaving Cream and Razors</i>    |
| <i>Tissues</i>      | <i>Shampoo and Conditioner</i>     |
| <i>Toilet Paper</i> | <i>Women's Hygiene Products</i>    |
| <i>Combs</i>        | <i>Towels and Wash Cloths</i>      |
| <i>Baby Diaper</i>  | <i>Baby Shampoo, Powder, Oil</i>   |
| <i>Baby Q-Tips</i>  | <i>Baby Wipes.</i>                 |

**Please remember we will be closed Fridays** beginning June 4, 2010.... Because of our current budget deficit, the Shepherd of the Streets office (as well as the United Churches main office) will be closed on Fridays beginning the first week of June. Donations to the general fund will help to prevent further - or extended cuts. *(See page 5)*

**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 devotionalists this summer include:

5/10-16 Fr. Dan Kovalak      5/17-23 Rev. Danesta Whaley  
5/24-30 Rev. Jeff Zetto      5/31-6/6 Mrs. Sandy Grier  
6/7-13 Rev. Gwen Bernstine      6/14-20 Ms. Nan Porter  
6/21-27 Mrs. Melanie Toramina      6/28-7/4 Rev. Jeff Zetto  
7/5-11 Revs. Jim/Kathy Behrens      7/12-18 Rev. Danesta Whaley  
7/19-25 Rev. Bob Lauver      7/26-8/1 Rev. Gwen Bernstine  
8/2-8 Revs. Jim/Kathy Behrens      8/9-15 Rev. Kenton Hunt  
8/16-22 Ms. Nan Porter      8/23-29 Mrs. Sandy Grier  
8/30-9/5 Rev. Jeff Zetto      9/6-12 Revs. Jim/Kathy Behrens  
9/13-19 Rev. Bob Lauver      9/20-26 Rev. Gwen Bernstine

*Listen today, and share this number with others!*

*It's a great way to have a closer walk with God.*

*Business cards are available at our office  
for this devotion line ministry.*

**UNITED CAMPUS MINISTRY \***

*Sharon Comini, Coordinator,*

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

**W**e recently held our Feed your Finals event and were able to give away many study bags to students who were very happy to receive them. Thank you to all the congregations that put them together.

It's hard to believe that a whole school year is finished. That means that the summer months allow me to do planning for the fall semester. I'll be looking for churches and their pastors to lead the Wednesday evening Worship times and bring the suppers. And I'll also be lining up volunteers for the Monday evening Faith Talks.

I would like to find a congregational representatives who are willing to be part of Campus Ministry planning, and be the liaison to the congregation to keep them informed about what is happening and what is needed. Anyone interested in becoming more involved, please call.

UNITED CHURCHES  
IS YOUR CHURCH  
E - - X - - T - - E - - N - - D - - E - - D  
IN MINISTRY

**FOOD PANTRY \***

*Gail Burkhart, Coordinator*

*Contact at: 322-1657*

**O**ur United Churches/Center City Food Pantry provides a three day supply of food to those in need. This April we helped 137 families, including 161 adults, 94 children and 49 elderly for a total of 304 persons. It's interesting to see the demographics changing. We are serving more elderly than we have been and certainly less than we would expect.

The number of households is smaller than we have had previously, and the numbers in the households are smaller than usual. How do we interpret this? I'm not sure but I do know that we see people today that have never been to a pantry, have no resources left, have exhausted their unemployment benefits and are scared, angry and tired. Which is all a recipe for disaster somewhere down the road.

It's plain to see that our governments (local and national) don't know what to do to fix the problems on a long term basis. So we just go on helping each other however we can and doing whatever we can to give a helping hand. And every can that you contribute is one donation that amounts to a lot of food when all the donations are put together! Many thanks to you for keeping us in prayer and for your thoughtfulness in your contributions.

Don't forget that we need prayer as well. Last month we asked about someone to pick up bread and sweets. I guess no one was reading who could help as we are still in real need for this part of our ministry.

You often have me tell you about our wonderful volunteers. Well, they have been beset by all manner of illnesses and injuries. So we are in need of some folks to work directly with the clients as they get their food. It isn't extremely heavy work, you need to be able to lift grocery bags of food and standing is definitely a requirement. The hours are flexible, mornings or afternoons on either a Tuesday or Thursday. Anyone interested? The volunteers that we have, have all been here 3+ years and like it. Perhaps a step out of your comfort zone is just what you need to bring some smiles and satisfaction into your life! Call 570-322-1657 for more details.

Items needed at the pantry this month are:

<i>Tea Bags and Coffee</i>	<i>Powdered Drink Mixes</i>
<i>Pancake Mix and Syrup</i>	<i>Spaghetti Sauce</i>
<i>Jello and Instant Puddings</i>	<i>Oodles of Noodles</i>
<i>Canned Fruits</i>	<i>Pasta</i>
<i>Saltine Crackers</i>	<i>Ketchup Mustard</i>
<i>Packets of Oatmeal</i>	<i>Cereals</i>
<i>Cake Mixes and Frosting</i>	<i>Summer Treats for Kids</i>

**YOUR SUPPORT IS CRITICAL!**

**W**e, United Churches of Lycoming County (UCLC) are in a grave financial crisis. Throughout our history, our income has been provided mainly by regular cash contributions from churches and individuals. Over the last decade it has been inadequate and we have withdrawn money from invested funds. In addition, the economic downturn caused additional shrinkage of our invested funds. If withdrawals from investments continue at the current rate, with no significant increase in contributions, we will exhaust this source of income in 2-3 years.

Budgets have been tweaked over the last years to remove unnecessary expenses. Conversations have taken place regarding both increasing our income and reducing our expenses and the impact reductions have on our churches and community. Many have helped. The Fund Development Committee has been working hard to help people become more knowledgeable about what UCLC does and to help develop some fund raisers. Nonetheless, without a significant increase in income, reductions in services and staff were the next consideration, in order to insure the continued viability of our overall ministry.

In order to decrease expenses the following changes will be made beginning June 1.

- Our United Churches and Shepherd of the Streets Offices will now be open only 4 days per week. This will then reduce those staff person salaries by 20%.
- We will also put a freeze on committee expenditure and educational expenses.

How can you help increase income?

- Congregations need to financially support these ministries we do together, including it in their budget, and if possible raising the amount.
- Could you do a fund raiser this year and donate the proceeds to UCLC? Perhaps dinner at Hoss's - a bake sale and car wash,
- Buy tickets and go on the Amazing Grace Tour or Houses of Worship (see page 10) on August 7.
- Make a generous individual contribution.
- Make a bequest to UCLC in your will.

Our goal is to be back to full hours by January 2011 - if not September 2010. There is way too much need in our community and too much to do. Our plan is also to be able to wean ourselves from using invested funds within five years and be able to balance our budget with donated income. With God - and each of us - all things are possible!

**EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES \***

**C**lergy Management Skills: A Continuing Education Seminar is being offered on Wednesday, June 9 from 9-Noon at Sharon Lutheran Church, Selinsgrove by Diakon Family Life Services. The presenters will address some of the concerns and dilemmas clergy have regarding the administrative aspects of congregational life, including...

- Being seen as an "employee" vs. a pastor
- Dealing with congregational/individual resistance
- Congregational member expectations, and establishing limits
- Work/management of staff
- Keeping the Sabbath/day off
- Time management - accountability/integrity in tracking and reporting hours.

The presenters will address some of these areas and also participants areas of concerns. Rev. Dr. Richter has first-hand experience in congregational life and as an administrator. Mark Shaffer is the clinical director of Family Life Services, and has experience in working with clergy.

**E**VANGELISM: The Lay Ministry Institute of the Upper Susquehanna Synod ELCA will have one of the foremost evangelists present for an all day workshop on June 12, 8:30am-3:30pm The Rev. Fred Landsberg, Omaha, NB will share extensive thoughts about evangelism in the local congregation. This program will be held at the Washingtonville Lutheran Church, 10 Strawberry Ridge Road, Washingtonville. Cost for the workshop is \$30. For registration and addition information contact Rev. Melody Sell, 437-2652.

**G**eisinger's Department of Spiritual Care is offering many exciting courses this summer. Contact them for more information or to register at 570-214-5091. Flyers are available through Gwen at United Churches, 322-1110 or [director@uclc.org](mailto:director@uclc.org).

- When Religion Becomes Evil - Mondays, July 12, 19, 26, Aug 2, 9 from 7-9 p.m.
- Healing Presence (The Art of Caring Conversation) - Tuesday, Aug 3 from 7:30 - 9 p.m.
- Understanding Transsexualism: for Family, Friends & Caregivers -Mondays, Aug. 16, 23 from 7-9 p.m.
- Islam: Religion, History and Culture, Tuesdays, July 6-27 from 7-9 p.m.
- Daoism; the Classic Tao Te Ching, Tuesdays, August 3-17 from 7-9 p.m.
- Buddhist Studies: Emptiness, Heart Sutra and Four Marks of the Dharma - Wednesdays, April 21 - August 11 from 7-9 p.m.
- The Autobiography of God, Tuesdays, May 4 + 11

from 7-9 p.m.

- God Then and Now - Tuesday, May 25, 7:30-9 p.m.
- The Fifth Sacred Thing - Wednesday, Aug. 18 from 7-9 p.m.

### **CREATION CORNER**

*from our Christian Social Concerns Committee*

Beyond Earth Day 40:

Suggestions for Summer 2010 Readings,

Web-surfing, Guidebooks, DVDs,

Opportunities, Contemplations and Actions

**W**ith the April 22<sup>nd</sup> 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day past, and next the World Environment Day in June, followed by a summer opportunity to read the reasons why and the ways to be passionate about taking care of the world God created, here are some suggestions.

[www.congregationalresources.org/EarthDay](http://www.congregationalresources.org/EarthDay) lists ten links, those being for The Regeneration Project, Creation Care at SustainLane, Forum on Religion and Ecology, The Green Bible, Christianity and Ecology, Read The Spirit Creation Care, Interfaith Power and Light, Earth Ministry, Creation Care for Pastors, and Cool Congregations.

[www.green.congregationalresources.org](http://www.green.congregationalresources.org) is a blog powered by The Congregational Resource Guide with links to green religious organizations, other blogs, action networks, toolkits, and a video of "Faith at the December 2009 Global Climate Summit in Copenhagen".

[www.unep.org/wed/2010/english](http://www.unep.org/wed/2010/english) is the web site for the World Environment Day, June 5, 2010. The theme is "Many Species, One Planet, One Future." The U.N. declared 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity. Join the worldwide celebration of positive action for the environment!

Helpful books include the following:

*199 Ways to Please God: How to (Re-) Align Your Daily Life with Your Duty of Care for Creation.* Rianne C. ten Veen, Fastprint Gold, 2009.

*Biblical Prophets and Contemporary Environmental Ethics.* Hilary Marlow, Oxford University Press, 2009.

*Christianity and Ecology: Seeking the Well-Being of Earth and Humans.* Dieter T. Hessel, editor, Harvard Univ. Press, 2000. Other titles in the "Religions of the World and Ecology" series include Judaism, Islam, etc.

*Claiming Earth as Common Ground: The Ecological Crisis through the Lens of Faith.* Andrea Cohen-Kiener, Skylight Paths, 2009.

*Ecological Imaginations in the World Religions: An Ethnographic Atlas.* Tony Watling, Continuum Books, 2009

*The Gospel According to the Earth: Why the Good Book*

*is a Green Book.* Matthew Sleeth, M.D. Harper Collins, 2010  
*The Green Bible Devotional: A Book of Daily Readings.* Carla Barnhill, Harper Collins, 2009, paperback.

*Green Like God: Unlocking the Divine Plan for Our Planet.* Jonathan Merritt, FaithWords (Hatchette) Publishing Group, 2010. Also see his web site, Twitter, and Facebook page.

*Guardians of Being: Exploring Our Spiritual Bonds with Animals.* Patrick McDonnell (illustrator) and Eckhart Tolle (words). New World Library, 2009.

*Hope for Creation* (guidebook and DVD) in the Blessed Earth series. Matthew Sleeth, M.D. Zondervan/Dot&Cross/Harper Collins, 2010.

*Love God, Heal the Earth: 21 Leading Religious Voices Speak Out on Our Sacred Duty to Protect the Environment.* The Rev. Canon Sally G. Bingham, editor, St. Lynn's Press, 2009

*Serve God, Save the Planet: A Christian Call to Action.* Matthew Sleeth, M.D., Zondervan, 2009.

*Tending to Eden: Environmental Stewardship for God's People.* Scott Sabin, Judson Press, 2010.

Other Valuable Resources:

[www.blessedearth.org](http://www.blessedearth.org) is the site for "Blessed Earth: Serving God, Saving the Planet". It inspires and equips faith communities to be better earth stewards, promoting measurable environmental change and meaningful spiritual growth. Includes "Hope for Creation: A Live Global Simulcast."

An apprenticeship at the Center for Nature and Christian Spirituality, described at

[www.westminsterwoods.org/cncs](http://www.westminsterwoods.org/cncs)

A unique interfaith fellowship program in religious-environmental leadership, and a green certification process for religious institutions can be found described at [www.greenfaith.org](http://www.greenfaith.org). For teenagers there is the document "Let there be....stuff?", about connecting consumption and faith and ecology. Also see [www.storyofstuff.org](http://www.storyofstuff.org) and the downloadable "Repairing Eden", a sustainable eating guide for congregational meals.

DVDs on The Green Patriarch (Bartholomew, Eastern Orthodox ecumenical spiritual leader) may be found at [www.becketfilms.com](http://www.becketfilms.com).

**N**EXT NEWSLETTER.....SEPTEMBER Our next regular newsletter will be mailed September 14<sup>th</sup>. Deadline for information is September 1. A mini-newsletter, mailed to pastors only, will be done in mid-August with information for your church's September newsletter. Have a wonderful summer!

**SPECIAL EVENTS IN OUR COUNTY \***

**L**ife Chain 2010: Please mark your church calendars for this year’s Life Chain. As in the prior 17 years it will be held on the first Sunday of October at 2:30 p.m. on East Third Street (the “Golden Strip”) Williamsport, PA. The goal of the organization committee is to have 90 churches participate with 2,000 individuals praying for the lives of unborn children. The date is October 3, 2010. Additional information will be provided to Lycoming County churches by mail.

**C**APPA: The 2010 CAPP Performing Arts Showcase is Thursday, June 10, 2010 at the Community Arts Center, Williamsport. The dates and times are: Wednesday, June 9 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. and Thursday, June 10 from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. The committee is seeking adult volunteers for the event. If interested phone (570) 326-7700 for more information.

**F**amily Community Expo: “Citizens Awareness” Who can you depend on? Come & find out at the expo, on Thursday, May 13 from 7-7:30 p.m. at the Salvation Army, 457 Market Street, Williamsport. Many agencies will be participating.

**H**awaiian Luau: The Divine Providence Hospital Auxiliary will present an Hawaiian Luau to benefit the Cancer Treatment Center. It will be held on Sunday, June 27, 2010 at 1:00 pm In the hospital auditorium. The cost will be \$20 per person or \$18.00 a person for tables of 8. Enjoy dinner, entertainment, 50/50 drawings, raffle, door prizes, leis, and fun for all! Contact Norma Wood, 570-327-1934 or Isabel Shumbat, 570-323-7262 for tickets and information.

**J**uneteenth - 11th Annual Celebration will be held Saturday, June 19 from 1 - 5 p.m. at Brandon Park, Williamsport. This event commemorates emancipation - the end of slavery in the United States. From its Galveston, Texas origin in 1965 this observance of June 19th as the African American Emancipation Day has spread across the United States. It is a time of reflection and rejoicing which emphasizes African American education and achievement. There will be a Children's Carnival, Pony Rides, a Petting Zoo, Genealogy Advice, a Gifted Youth Art Exhibit, the Honoring of Dr. Mamie Diggs' Contribution and Julia C. Collins Contribution, C C (Lady) Clowns, Vendors and more.

**UPCOMING DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR**  
 October 10 (Sunday) - **CROP Walk** at 1:30 p.m. in Indian Park in Montoursville, in Montgomery, Trout Run and Hughesville.

**SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINISTRY \***

**S**UMMER PARKS CAMP: Help Sponsor a Child Summer is right around corner! Parents will be looking for a safe & fun place to put their child. The YMCA has a parks program for children ages 5-12 that runs from 9-3 weekdays this summer. This program includes fun activities, lunch and swimming at our two convenient locations at Memorial and East End Park.

The YMCA hopes to make camp accessible for families who are struggling financially. The YMCA is an organization dedicated to build strong kids, strong families, and a strong community. You can partner in this mission by sponsoring a child or children so they may attend the parks program. For just \$5 a week you can sponsor a child or \$35 will sponsor a child for the entire 9 week program, providing an exciting summer experience for many of our local children. If you can help or or would like more information, please contact Megan Hill (Senior Program Director) at 570-323-7134 ext.47.

**B**LOCK PARTY For many years, a growing number of area churches have been holding neighborhood Block Parties. They are a way to bring all segments of your neighborhood together. Block Parties are one way to show area residents that not only does God offer them love and hope, but that a relationship with God inspires people to become more caring and responsive toward each other. Tips for your Block Party Planning are available in our office (322-1110 or uclc@sunlink.net). Some highlights follow:

- ✎ Invite other Churches to be involved.
- ✎ Get required permits early.
- ✎ Consider inviting pro-community groups to have a table and encourage them to distribute their literature and provide events (games) that relate to their mission.
- ✎ Plan for any weather, hot sun or rain.
- ✎ Don’t forget the entertainment.
- ✎ Food doesn’t have to cost a lot. Donations help provide a simple meal at no charge or at a minimal fee.
- ✎ Prepare posters and publicity.
- ✎ Plan ways to Welcome people as they arrive. Tell strangers where the food and restrooms are, when the music or entertainment will begin and so on.
- ✎ Have a next step planned to leverage the momentum started at the Block Party on to some upcoming opportunity for the residents, workers, and worshipers of an area to come together again.

**YOKEFELLOW***Evadna Cline, Director, Yokefellow Center - 326-6868*

Life can be a wilderness or a paradise. It all depends upon how you look at it and what you make of it. Above is a quote from John Killinger in the first paragraph of his book *Bread for the Wilderness* Wine for the Journey. Mr. Killinger goes on to say, "U it has seemed like a wilderness to you, that's because you have seen it as a wilderness. Some people, given the same life and the same opportunities would have seen it differently. They would have thanked God for the paradise. Even people who have borne great tragedy have viewed the world with courageous optimism; Two men looked out from prison bars: One saw the mud, the other saw the stars.

Two very different articles came across my desk this week. The first was a copy of an article from *correctional NEWSFRONT* entitled, "First State Prison Inmate Departs for Virginia DOC" The article is accompanied by a picture of an inmate being escorted aboard a bus with the accompanying article stating that in the early morning hours of Feb. 9, just prior to a major snow storm's arrival, officials at the State Correctional Institution at Camp Hill began preparing the first group of inmates for a six-hour trip to a Virginia State prison. Inmates were notified only 24 hours earlier. They were locked down immediately and instructed to begin packing their personal belongings. A total of 125 inmates were scheduled for this transfer. The question in my mind lingers: How many of those prisoners will be able to look out their new cell window to see stars, and how many will look down to the ground and only see mud?

The second article was from *TIME* and was written by William Lee Adams. It's byline was, *Norway Builds the World's Most Humane Prison*. Mr. Adams recounts, "By the time the trumpets sound, the candles have been lit and the salmon garnished, Harold V., King of Norway, enters the room and 200 guests stand to greet him. Then a chorus of 30 men and women, each wearing a blue police uniform, launches into a spirited rendition of "We are the World." This wasn't cabaret night at Oslo's Royal Palace. It's a gala to inaugurate Halden Fengsel, Norway's newest prison.

Halden, Norway's second largest prison, with a capacity of 252 inmates embodies the guiding principles of the country's penal system that repressive prisons do not work and that treating prisoners humanely boosts their chances of re-integrating into society. Holden houses drug dealers, murderers and rapists, among others. We want to build them up, give them confidence through education and work and have them leave as better people."

Within two years of their release, 20% of Norway's prisoners end up back in jail. In the U.K. and the U.S. that

figure hovers between 50% and 60%. Norway's prison roll lists a mere 3,300 inmates or 69 per 100,000 people compared with 2.3 million in the U.S. or 753 per 100,000, the highest rate in the world. The cells rival well-appointed college dorm rooms, with their full screen TV's and mini-fridges. Designers chose long vertical windows for the rooms because they let in more sunlight. There are no bars. Every 10 to 20 cells share a living room and kitchen. With their stainless steel countertops, wraparound sofas and birch-colored coffee tables, they resemble Ikea showrooms. Halden's greatest asset, though, may be the strong relationship between staff and inmates. Prison guards don't carry guns-that creates unnecessary intimidation and social distance-and they routinely eat meals and play sports with the inmates. "Many of the prisoners come from bad homes, so we wanted to create a sense of love and acceptance among the inmates."

Again, this article raises the question in my mind, "How many of these inmates will see the mud instead of the stars. Or, in religious terms, will they experience God's presence or only feel His absence? Are you willing to help inmates look to the stars?"

Dr. Killinger recalls a woman from his parish who would be sitting by a window in her room where she could watch the small children playing in a field nearby. I am praying for them, she told me. Every day I pray for them. I am not good for anything else. God knows, but I pray that they will grow up healthy and good. If only there were a window like hers looking out on all the children of the world. or ten thousand windows like hers ten thousand times ten thousand, it would be an entirely different world tomorrow.

And, I'm sure if all the persons in this valley would turn their eyes to the windows facing the federal, state and local prisons, great spiritual battles would be won That kind of praying is not mere wishful thinking. It is real prayer. It is lending your own power of concentration and desire to God for His use in the world. And it harmonizes with the yearning of His own heart for the kingdom, for the day when all people will live in wonderful peace with each other offering himself or herself to love and greatness to all the others.

What better way for those who, looking out upon the world with it's great confusion and turmoil would see the stars of hope and love for those who are looking only at mud now. Dr. Killinger states, "We might still see the turmoil, but we know what we can do about it. Please call the Yokefellow Prison Ministry office at 326-6868 for more information.

*-Thank you Evadna, for your leadership at Yokefellow. She has submitted her resignation and will be retiring. Please keep her and her health concerns in prayer.*

**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOLS AROUND OUR COUNTY**

DATE	PLACE	THEME	DETAILS
June 13-18	Moreland Baptist Church 118 Moreland Baptist Road, Muncy	Son Quest Rain Forest	6 - 8:30 p.m. Ages 3 - Grade 6
June 13-17	St. Mark's Lutheran Church 142 Market Street, Williamsport	High Seas Adventure	5:30 - 8:30 p.m (w/supper) Pre K - Grade 5
June 14-18	West Fourth St. Association at St. Joseph the Worker Annunciation's Fleming Parish Center - 720 W 4 <sup>th</sup> St.	Veggie Tales: The Pirates Who Don't Do Anything	9 a.m. - Noon Pre K - Grade 4
June 14-18	Messiah Lutheran Church 324 South Howard Street, South Williamsport	BADBAB Blast	9 a.m. - Noon Age 4 - Grade 6
June 14-25	First Southern Baptist Church 89 Kimble Hill Road, Williamsport	Wilderness Adventure	9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Grades 2 - 6
June 21-25	Pine Street United Methodist Church 441 Pine Street, Williamsport	Galactic Blast	6:15 - 1:30 p.m. Age 3 - Middle School
June 21-25	Faxon Kenmar United Methodist Church 1301 Clayton Avenue, Williamsport	Music Camp for Kids Interested in Music	9 - Noon - Must Register Kindergarten - Grade 8
June 21-25	St. Matthew's Lutheran and St John's Newberry United Methodist Church at 2101 Newberry Street, Williamsport	BAOBAB Blast	9:30 a.m. - Noon Kindergarten - Grade 6
June 25-26	Door Fellowship 470 Pine Street, Williamsport	Bible Land Expedition	9 a.m. - 1 p.m. (w/lunch) Ages 5-12
July 12-16	First United Methodist Church Christian Life Center 601 Market Street, Williamsport	Hero Headquarters	9 a.m. - Noon Age 3 - Grade 5
July 12-16	Trout Run United Methodist Church 78 Creamery Street, Trout Run	Son Quest Rain Forest	6:30 - 8:30 p.m. (11:45 Sun.) Preschool - Adult
July 18-22	Church of the Savior Lutheran 522 Grier Street, Williamsport	Veggie Tales: The Pirates Who Don't Do Anything	6:30 - 8:30 p.m. Age 3 - Grade 5 Also Special Education
July 18-22	St. Luke Lutheran Church 1400 Market Street, Williamsport	BAOBAB Blast	6 - 8:30 p.m. Age 4 - Grade 4
July 25-29	Trinity United Methodist Church 1971 Lycoming Creek Rd. Williamsport	High Seas Expedition	6 - 8 p.m. Ages 3-12
July 26-30 Closing 8/1	St. Paul - Calvary United Methodist Church 1427 Memorial Avenue, Williamsport	Studio Go!	6-8:30 p.m. (w/supper) Age 4 - Youth
Aug 1-5	New Covenant United Church of Christ 202 East Third Street, Williamsport	Galactic Blast	6-8:30 Age 3 - Grade 6
Aug 2-6	Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church 369 Broad Street, Montoursville (social hall)	Son Quest Rain Forest	6:30 - 8 p.m. Pre K - Grade 6
Aug 3-7 Closing 8/8	Hepburn Baptist Church 2917 Pleasant Balley Road, Cogan Station	Back Stage with the Bible	5:45 - 8:00 p.m. Pre K - Grade 6

## Amazing Grace Tour

### Saturday August 7, 2010

10:00 am to 2:00 pm

Join us in visiting some of our beautiful houses of worship this year. Included in each tour:

- Music
- Architecture
- Stained glass windows
- History
- Refreshments



#### WILLIAMSPORT HOUSES OF WORSHIP INCLUDED IN THE 2010 TOUR

- First United Methodist Church, 2 Ross Street - Corner of Packer, Ross and Market Streets
- Christ Episcopal Church, 426 Mulberry Street - Corner of East Fourth and Mulberry Streets
- First Baptist Church, 380 West Fourth Street - Corner of West Fourth and Elmira Streets
- Temple Beth Ha Shalom, 425 Center Street - Corner of Center and West Edwin Streets
- St. Joseph the Worker Parish: Annunciation Church, 702 West Fourth Street - Corner of West Fourth and Walnut Streets

Cost per ticket: \$10

Proceeds to fund programs for:

- United Churches of Lycoming County (202 East Third Street)
- The Center (500 Campbell Street) \*

Tickets can be purchased at The Center or United Churches of Lycoming County or from a committee member.

Contacts/Committee:

Gwen Bernstine, United Churches of Lycoming County ([uclc@sunlink.net](mailto:uclc@sunlink.net))

Melodie Russell, The Center ([officmanager@campbellstreetcenter.org](mailto:officmanager@campbellstreetcenter.org))

Gerry Fausnaught, Chair

Pam Markle, Jackie Thomas

\*Information Center August 7 from 9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. - phone (570) 322-5515