



UNITED CHURCHES' NEWS

Published Monthly by the

UNITED CHURCHES OF LYCOMING COUNTY

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Please notify us of changes of email address.

Thank You for receiving our newsletter via email. It is a wonderful donation of postage, office supplies and volunteer time.

A SERVICE OF HEALING AND HOPE*

An Ecumenical "Blue Christmas Service," will be hosted by United Churches of Lycoming County at 2 Sunday afternoon, Dec. 18th at New Covenant United Church of Christ, 202 East 3rd St., Williamsport.

The seasons of Advent and Christmas can be an emotionally charged time. There is a great deal of pressure to feel joyous, as well as an emphasis on remembering and togetherness. For those who are hurting, the atmosphere of this time of year can amplify feelings of pain, grief, loneliness or despair.



The "Blue Christmas Service" is an opportunity to come together to acknowledge your pain, be reassured that you are not alone in your feelings, and to experience a message of God's unconditional love, the heart of the seasons.

Please help to promote this service throughout your congregations. Everyone is invited to attend, pastors and laity are encouraged to participate. *(Bulletin insert in packet)*

Anyone interested in helping plan the service is invited to attend a meeting at New Covenant at 11am on Thursday, Nov. 10th. Anyone wishing to participate in the service, please contact Pastor Brad at New Covenant (570-326-3308) or Pastor Gwen at the United Churches office.

VOLUNTEER NOW FOR 2017 MINISTRIES*

We are getting ready to fill the ministries schedule for 2017. Both clergy & laity are needed. **Worship:**

Nursing Home -Assisted Living Centers:

Sundays at 2: Manor Care South
Valley View Loyalsock Creek RNC

Sundays at 2:15: Manor Care North (2 services)
Rose View Center

Sundays at 3: Williamsport Home (2 services)
Sundays - The Hillside (3:10), The Meadows(3)
Leighton Place (3), Elmcroft (3)

Wednesdays at 11 - West Edwin Street Apartments

Thursdays at 11 - Presbyterian Home

Prison Worship Services (Sundays)

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

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

Daily Telephone Devotion Line - Record from your home.

Volunteers have responsibility for one week at a time.

Footsteps to Follow Editorials: Clergy and people in professional para church leadership are invited to sign up for a week's turn at these newspaper editorials in the Saturday morning Sun Gazette.

Please contact us at director@uclc.org or 570-322-1110 to be part of these ministries. We need you!



Follow us and others at "United Churches of Lycoming County" & "Walking With God in Lycoming County"



70th ANNUAL DINNER & ASSEMBLY*

Register today for the 70th United Churches Assembly Dinner which will be held Thursday, November 17 at First United Methodist Church of Muncy, 602 S. Market Street, Muncy. The church is handicapped accessible and parking surrounds the church. Registration begins at 5:45 P.M., with the dinner at 6:30 P.M. The evening includes:

- ★ Presentation of an Ecumenical Service Award.
- ★ Election of officers and new board members.
- ★ Adoption of the 2017 Budget.
- ★ Celebrating: Seventy Years And Counting!

Attending from each member congregation should be three delegates, the pastor and two lay people. *We encourage other interested persons to be present as non-voting representatives of your congregations.*

The cost \$12.00 and includes dinner served family style. The menu is ham loaf, scalloped potatoes, green beans w/almonds, fruited jello, rolls, beverage, cake and ice cream. Each person will also receive an annual report book. Please call the United Churches office, 322-1110 or at director@uclc.org to make your reservation.

Church Women United's Christmas stocking bags will be assembled Monday, Nov. 14th beginning at 9 a.m. at Pine Street UMC, 441 Pine Street, Williamsport, (free parking signs will be available in the church). Women are welcome to help assemble and package the 1200+ stocking bags for distribution to area nursing home residents, and for children who visit mothers at Muncy SCI.



DIAL - A - DEVOTION *

Have you called yet?

The number is 570-322-5762.

It's available 24 hours a day.



Devotions change each weekday and once on the weekend, and are designed to lift your spirit and help you to have "*A Closer Walk with God.*" The devotionists this fall include:

11/7-13 Pastors Jim & Kathy Behrens 11/14-20 Mrs. Dorothy Wagner
11/21-27 Rev. Gwen Bernstine 11/28-12/4 Mrs. Patty Gohrs
12/5-11 Pastors Jim & Kathy Behrens 12/12-18 Mrs. Dorothy Wagner

Listen today and tell others about this ministry!

A devotion line business card is available from our office as a convenient reminder or to share.

UNITED CHURCHES FOOD PANTRY *

foodpantry@uclc.org or 570-322-1627

We here at the Food Pantry would like to give a big *T-h-a-n-k-s* to all of you that contribute to our purpose! As we get closer to the holidays and become very busy don't forget to think and pray for those who are food insecure.

We read in 2 Corinthians that the churches of Macedonia, even when in trial and poverty, their abundant joy provided much generosity. The act of grace: in faith, speech, knowledge, earnestness and love has been kindled in us as Christians. So let us excel in the grace of giving!



Our clients are so very happy, joyful, and *thankful* to those that have contributed to their lives without wanting to be acknowledge for their generosity. As we approach this day of Thanksgiving

keep in your minds and prayers the people who need pantries to put enough food on their tables for their families, and the pantries you support so generously.

Your thoughtful giving will not go unnoticed by our Lord, who is more generous than we will ever hope to be.

Right now our shelves are depleted. To assist families we need all types and kinds of non-perishable of items:

<i>Soups</i>	<i>Canned Meats</i>	<i>Noodles</i>
<i>Stuffings</i>	<i>Canned Fruits</i>	<i>Canned Vegetables</i>
<i>Sauces</i>	<i>Condiments</i>	<i>Mixes</i>
<i>Pastas</i>	<i>Healthy Snacks</i>	<i>Oatmeal</i>
<i>Cereals</i>	<i>Your Family's Favorites and more!</i>	

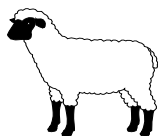
All of us here at the pantry and United Churches are so very *thankful* for all of you that take the time and effort to be so grace-filled to those that are less fortunate. Please also remember to check the expiration dates on the items before giving to us. Otherwise we have to throw it away and that is such a loss!!

The Pantry is also in need of *volunteers*, esp on Thursdays, to help the clients go through and receive their items. So if you or someone you may know is looking for some other way to contribute to the community you may give us a call or stop on by!!

We are located at the rear of 320 Park Ave in Williamsport. The hours of operation are:
Mondays 9-12 for donations/stocking
Tuesdays 10:15 – 2:30 Clients/distribution
Thursdays 10:15 – 2:30 Clients/distribution

SHEPHERD OF THE STREETS*

J. Morris Smith, Th.D.,
570-322-6538, shepherd@uclc.org



As it is written, “He scatters abroad, He gives to the poor; His righteousness endures forever. He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God.” II Cor. 9:9-12

We stand in the threshold of the most blessed time of the year...harvest and the advent of our Lord and Savior. But, it is also the threshold of weather related issues such as illnesses in need of medicine and mental and relational oppressions that seem to surface when the ultimate answer for all of these should be our focus...behold, your salvation has come.

The last four months have been difficult. The cost of nearly everything (especially medicine) has gone up and the economy has gone down. At the SOS office we have ceased some help-programs, taken cuts in personal financial involvement, and have plans for cutting some other programs with medical and safety emphasis.

For you who have faithfully given, we are most appreciative. For you who will give in this winter season, we are grateful and we thank you even now for your support to help us achieve our mission. Be assured that your donation will be used to help with medicine, glasses, safe practices, and work-entry needs.

We are most grateful for the Plankenhorn Foundation that assists us with providing heat, electricity, and water...for the United Way of Lycoming Co. for providing the dental grant for oral surgery.

We also thank all of you who collect hygiene items, bedding, and baby needs for us. The list of hygiene items we use follows, and are regular sizes of:

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

WEDNESDAY ECUMENICAL LUNCHES*

Join us Wednesdays for lunch and an interesting 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 at the United Churches Office 570-322-1110 if you are not a regular attender will help the caterer know how to prepare. When winter weather makes travel difficult on Wednesdays call Gwen at 570-419-1464 or 570-323-5911 to know if Ecumenical lunch has been cancelled.



NOVEMBER

- 9- **Jonathan Williamson, Ph.D.**, Chair, Dept. of Political Science, Lycoming College, **“Election Reflections”**
- 16- **Laurie Weinreb-Welch**, Penn State Extension Educator. Family Consumer Services, **“Totally Veggies”**
- 23- **Joe Campagna, Jr.** Executive Director, Yellow Wolf Advocacy Project, **“Protecting Basic Legal Rights”**
- 30- **Rev. Bob Wallace**, Pastor, Heshbon Park UMChurch, **“Christmas Stories for the Whole Family”**

DECEMBER

- 7- **Dr. Charles Getchell**, Lycoming College Faculty Emeritus, **“Carol-Ring”**
- 14- **“Sharing Your Christmas Traditions”**
- 21- **Rev. Gwen Bernstine**, Staff, United Churches, **“Twas The Time Before that First Christmas...”**

Join us! Bring a friend! Make new friends!

INFORMATION AVAILABLE

Our Directory for Lycoming County is now available from our United Churches Office or at the Annual Assembly.

The resource “What To Do When Persons Need Help” has a few corrections and additions for you to please note....

- 1. F. West End CCC Soup Kitchen: The phone number should read... 570-323-6297.
- 2. I. West End CCC Food Bank: The address should read... 901 Diamond St, and phone... 570-323-1891
- 2.N. Add an additional pantry at Christ Community Worship Center, 436 West 4th St., Wmspt., Open the 2nd Sat. 9-Noon, monthly. Call 570-322-7141.

An updated copy (as a pdf file) can always be found on our website resource page.

POVERTY: A FAITH-BASED RESPONSE

The Christian Social Concerns Committee

Blessed is he who keeps faith forever, secures justice for the oppressed, gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets captives free (Ps 146:7). Faith empowers us to take action through charity and justice. Both are necessary. Before we celebrate Thanksgiving, take time to assess what are our commitments to charity and justice regarding those who are hungry.

What is hunger? Everyone feels hungry on a daily basis. Most people are able to satisfy this craving and need. Even if not immediately, they can count on having a meal or snack within hours. This is not the type of hunger that we need to be concerned with. People who suffer chronic hunger don't have the option of eating when hungry. They don't get enough calories, essential nutrients, or both. People who are hungry have an ongoing problem with getting food to eat. They have a primary need – how to feed themselves and their children today and tomorrow. They have little energy for anything else. (Source: Bread for the World)

Access and availability of food - Some countries have a "hunger season" every year. It's when the previous harvest is gone and the next harvest is not yet ready. It can last as long as three or four months. The U.S. does not have that kind of hunger season, but for many families, some weeks are hungrier than others. These usually come toward the end of the month, as families run short of food before they have money to buy more. People can't simply decide to spend less on rent, but if necessary, they can spend less on food. For many low-wage workers, retirees, people with disabilities, and their families, even careful planning cannot stretch the grocery budget throughout the month. Less expensive – and less nutritious – filler foods can keep children's stomachs from growling, but they can't provide what children need to grow and learn. Adults who are missing meals because they can't afford to buy food can't concentrate as well at work. (Source: www.bread.org)

Tax Justice: Ensuring no one is taxed into poverty – No low wage worker should be taxed into poverty. Right now there are about 7.5 million adults between the ages of 21 and 66 who are pushed into poverty by federal payroll and income taxes. These low wage workers don't qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) which offsets other workers' taxes because the credit is largely given only to those who have children living in their home. There are bipartisan proposals to expand the EITC to these taxpayers, including almost identical proposals from President Obama and House Speaker Paul Ryan. Advocates expect Congress to pass an end-of-the-year package of tax credits comprised largely of

tax benefits for corporations. People of faith and their allies need to urge Congress to include an expansion of EITC to childless workers in any tax package that might be passed. (Source: NETWORK)

Addresses to use:

Senator Robert Casey, Jr., U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Patrick Toomey, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Tom Marino, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515

CLASSIFIEDS:

Recruiting for AmeriCorps is now accepting applications for two new positions now available for immediate placement. There is a full time position with the WASD and half-time position with the ASPCA. Applications, position descriptions and benefits are available in our email extras packet, on our website with the newsletter, or by contacting STEP AmeriCorps, Daryl Kern, 570-601-9672 or Emily Gale, 570-601-9677.



Tammy Aichner, Coordinator, ucm@uclc.org

Irecently read an article by the Campus Minister at the University of Richmond. It was his "new year kick off" speech. In it he tells the students, "Kairos, this University of Richmond Christian community, this particular outpost of the kingdom, is not the biggest and flashiest show in town. We meet in the quiet of a Tuesday night in a darkened chapel while most of the campus goes about its regular business. We don't try to wow you with slick advertising gimmicks, or fancy technology, or parroted easy answers to life's deepest mysteries. Instead what Kairos strives to be is a community where you will always be welcome, a community where nobody is perfect and we don't pretend to be, a community of diverse perspectives and opinions about the world, faith, and campus life, a community where grace abounds and Jesus is present, and where flawed and broken people are trying to love one another and be the body of Christ for others."

As I read that, I can't help but think of our own Campus Ministry. Four years ago I would have told you I needed to create all these flashy programs for success. We may even be guilty of this in our own congregation. Today, the programs that generate the most excitement, the programs that are the most successful, are the programs that are the least flashy. The programs that put our students together with "the least of these" are what they look forward to. *-continued*

We are closing out our Fall semester by serving at Sojourner Truth the Sunday before Thanksgiving. We will be making homemade chili and chicken noodle soup. This will be our 2nd year and I see this becoming an annual event, much like our Meal in a Bag. Our students, and those from The Harbor, were touched last year after serving. If you and your church need a break from flashy, call Pastor Velinda at Sojourner Truth. She would love to help you set a date to serve a meal. If you feel like it is out of your comfort zone, pray about it. God is already there... just waiting for you to join Him. I should issue the warning, though, serving others is highly addictive!

CELEBRATE THANKSGIVING: Several of the Ministeriums in our County have reported they are hosting ecumenical Thanksgiving services this year. All are welcome to attend.



- ▶ Hepburn Lycoming Ministerium Service will be held Sunday, Nov. 20 at 6 p.m. at Heshbon Park United Methodist Church, 2898 Heshbon Rd, Williamsport.
- ▶ The Muncy Ministerium Service will be Sunday, Nov. 20 at 7 p.m. at the Muncy Presbyterian Church, 10 Penn Street, Muncy.
- ▶ The Montoursville Ministerium is holding their Thanksgiving service Sunday, Nov. 20 at 7 pm at Beth-el UMChurch, 400 Montour St., Montoursville.
- ▶ The Montgomery Ministerium Service will be Sunday, November 20 at 7 pm at Grace United Presbyterian Church, 105 Second St., Montgomery. Preacher: Pastor Rebecca Cuddeback. Refreshments follow.
- ▶ The Nippenose Valley Community Service will be at Oval United Methodist Church, Wednesday, November 23 at 7 p.m. Preacher: the Rev. Dr. Kerry Aucker.

MINISTRY NEEDS

Sojourner Truth is in need of kid snacks! Due to the remodeling of the Food Bank they are running short on snacks for their "After School Snack Program" and are asking for any donations to help us continue on providing lunch snack to community kids. Needed are: nutritional snacks, all kinds of chips, cookies, fruit snacks, popcorn, pretzels, etc... Any questions call 570-323-1797

CREATION CORNER

The Christian Social Concerns Committee

Animals and Us

Because all creatures are connected, each must be cherished with love and respect, for all of us as living creatures are dependent on one another. -Pope Francis

We all, no doubt, consider ourselves "humane." Over a hundred years ago, after the "Appeal To Reason" published Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, a public outcry over meat-packing industry practices, for laboring workers and meat-processing, led Congress to pass the 1906 Meat Inspection Act. In 2016 an international outcry took place over the killing of a protected African lion, Cecil, in Zimbabwe.

We do have moral/ethical concerns. But do we compartmentalize them away from our consumer habits? Might we "position ourselves as consumers first and moral beings second if at all?", asks G. Monbiot in a (9/ 23-29) article in *The Guardian Weekly*. Might the feared extinction of species be "simply the consequence of our uncontrolled consumerism?"

So we need to ask ourselves: Might we tread more lightly on God's earth? Eat less (or no) meat? Question "factory farms?" Refrain from big game trophy hunting, and wearing furs. Can we speak up about the importation and sale of endangered species parts, often secured from poaching?

Are there groups worth support – Christian Vegetarian Association, the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS has a Faith Advisory Council), the ASPCA, PETA, etc.? For a recent view of the theology of animals see the July issue of *Sojourners* (sojo.net). To understand what less animal cruelty means, read Wayne Pacelle's *The Humane Economy*. For animal rights, see the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM.org).

The Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF.org) has an Animal Bill of Rights petition to the U.S. Congress. The preamble notes that animals, like all sentient beings, are entitled to basic legal rights in our society. Internationally, there is an effort on behalf of non-human animal rights, represented in the western hemisphere by AFADA (the Spanish acronym for the Assoc. of Officials and Lawyers for Animal Rights), and, in the U.S. by the Nonhuman Rights Project.

So animals, as nature itself, both long-regarded as "things-", are now being recognized as being bearers of legal rights, albeit limited. Of course there are old animal welfare laws and ordinances...but enough? Stay tuned in. The law evolves. While non-human species have no capacity to argue for themselves, might *Homo sapiens* do it for them?

"One touch of nature makes the whole world kin." William Shakespeare

THANKSGIVING DINNERS

- ❖ Tuesday Nov 15 from 6-8 pm at Calvary Church of the Nazarene, 3200 Lycoming Creek Road. Bus pick-up will be at St. Anthony's Center at 5:30 and at American Rescue Workers at 5:45.
- ❖ Monday, November 21 from 11-1 at West End Christian Community Center, 901 Diamond Street.
- ❖ Wednesday, Nov. 23, Thanksgiving Day beginning at noon at St. Anthony's Center, 125 East Willow Street, Williamsport. Delivery is available for shut-ins (call 570-326-2244 by 10:30 am)
- ❖ Thursday, Nov. 24, Thanksgiving Day at the American Rescue Workers from Noon until 3 p.m. in their 2nd Floor Dining Room at 643 Elmira Street, Williamsport. Delivery is available only to shut-ins and handicapped by calling 570-323-8401 x110 by Wednesday at noon.
- ❖ Thursday, Nov. 24, Thanksgiving Day at Trinity United Methodist Church, 1407 Allegheny St, Jersey Shore from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.
- ❖ Thursday, Nov. 24, Thanksgiving Day at Sojourner Truth Ministry, 501 High Street, Williamsport from 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES:

Surviving the Holidays after experiencing a tragic loss or death of a loved one is the topic of a video-based seminar on Tuesday, November 15, at 7:00 in the lounge of First United Methodist Church, 602 S. Market St., Muncy. Please register through the church office: 570-546-8030.

Youth Culture: The founder of Hip Hop Scholars, James Braxton Peterson, Ph.D., will discuss youth cultures during a presentation titled "Hip Hop Culture and the Practice of Inclusion," on Nov. 16 at 7:15 p.m. in the Mary L. Welch Honors Hall, on the corner of East Fourth and Basin Streets. The presentation is free and open to the public. Hip Hop Scholars, LLC, is an association of hip-hop generational scholars dedicated to researching and developing the cultural and educational potential of hip-hop, urban and youth cultures. This is part of a symposium on race and culture sponsored by the College to encourage discussions about race, culture and inclusion among faculty and students in classrooms and facilitated discussions.

EVENTS IN OUR COMMUNITY

Operation Christmas Child National Collection Week is November 14-21. If you have not gotten your materials or need to know your closest drop-off location contact Amy Seyler, North Central Church Relations Team, 570-745-3555 or seylerrich@yahoo.com.

Music At Lycoming: Several special upcoming events. Admission is free unless otherwise noted. For more information and to see a complete schedule visit www.lycoming.edu/musicatlycoming :

- ▶ Lycoming College Choir in Concert at Faxon Kenmar United Methodist Church at 2 pm Nov. 13
- ▶ Candlelight Service at 6:30 pm at Clark Chapel Dec. 4

Williamsport Music Club will present Christmas Music by Candlelight at the Pine St. United Methodist Church on Sunday, Dec. 4, at 4.

Handel's Messiah Sing-Along and Play-Along is being sponsored by the Williamsport Music Club on Dec. 30 at Messiah Luth. Church from 7-9:30.

Festival Choir Planned: The Music Ministry of Faxon Kenmar United Methodist Church invites you to be part of the Third Annual Festival Choir on Sunday, May 7th at 2 p.m. There are no auditions. The choir is open to any youth or adult who enjoys singing sacred choral music. We have had up to 15 churches represented in our ecumenical choir. Singers are expected to attend four of the six rehearsal PLUS the dress rehearsal. The fee is \$20.00. Rehearsal times are listed on the registration form, which can be found in the emailed/online extras pack. Registration is needed by **12/15/16**. If you have questions contact David Koskey H-570-322-8562 or Cell-570-220-2621.

An Old Fashioned Christmas Bazaar: Christmas Crafts, Cookies and More & A Holiday Rummage Sale will be held Saturday, December 3 from 9-2 Calvary Baptist Church 42 Washington Blvd. Williamsport.

An Annual Clothing/Toy Give-Away will be held Saturday, December 10 from 9-Noon at Christ Community Worship Center, 436 W. 4th St, Wmspt.

A Community Dinner will be held Sunday, December 11 at 2 pm at Christ Community Worship Center, Inc. 436 West 4th St. Williamsport.