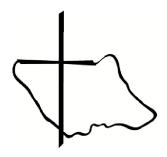
UNITED CHURCHES' NEWS

Published Monthly by the

United Churches of Lycoming County

202 East Third Street, Williamsport PA 17701 Phone 570-322-1110 E-Mail director@uclc.org





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

Volume XXVIII Number 11 November 8, 2011

COME TO OUR ANNUAL ASSEMBLY*

ur 65th Annual Assembly of the United Churches will be held Thursday, November 17 at Pine Street United Methodist Church, 441 Pine Street, in Williamsport. Parking is available in the lot north of the Church, and handicapped parking is available close to the center door. Registration begins at 5:45 P.M., with the dinner at 6:30 P.M. The evening will include:

- Presentation of an Ecumenical Service Award.
- \star Election of officers and new board members.
- Adoption of the 2012 Budget. \star
- Theme: Celebrating Our Journey *

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.

Registration is \$11.00 and includes chicken francesca, au gratin potatoes, orange glazed carrots, cole slaw, roll and butter, assorted cakes and beverage. Each person will also receive an annual report book. Reservations are needed by Tuesday, November 8th. Pastors received an information packet via e-mail. Please call the United Churches office, 322-1110 or at *uclc@sunlink.net* to make your reservation.

VOLUNTEER NOW FOR 2012 MINISTRIES*

Te are getting ready to fill the ministries schedule for 2012.

Both 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

Wednesdays at 10:30 weekly - Sycamore Manor

Thursdays at 11 weekly - Presbyterian Home

2 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 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 uclc@sunlink.net or 322-1110 to learn about how you can be part of these ministries. We need you!

WEDNESDAY ECUMENICAL LUNCHES*

For in us from 12 to 1 p.m. for the Wednesday Noon Ecumenical Lunch Program. 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 p.m. Although reservations are not needed, if you are not a regular attender, a call to United Churches, 322-1110, will help us let our caterer know how many to prepare for. When the weather is iffy - call Gwen at 419-1464 to be sure this program is still being held or listen to WRAK.

NOVEMBER:

- 9- Mr. Dan Doyle, UCLC Christian Social Concerns Committee, "Faithful Budget: Creating a Circle of Protection for the Poor"
- 16- The Rev. Dr. James Behrens, Pastor, Trinity United Methodist Church and Chair of United Churches Broadcasting Committee, "Lifting Spirits In Our Community"
- 23- **The Rev. Kevin Brophy**, Pastor, Salladasburg United Methodist Charge "*Thanksgiving 2011*"
- 30- **The Rev. Larry Waltz**, United Churches Annual Assembly Committee, "*Celebrating Our Journey*"

DECEMBER:

- 7- Mr. Terry Roller, Executive Director, STEP Inc., "Success Through Engagement and Partnership
- 14- Revs. Kevin Brophy and Gwen Bernstine, Area Pastors, "It's Beginning to Sound a Lot Like Christmas"
- 21- Mr. And Mrs Carl Schlapi (Opal), Area Musicians "Christmas Songs"
- 28- No Lunch Scheduled Happy Holidays

UNITED CAMPUS MINISTRY

Sharon Comini, Coordinator
Contact at: 570-419-5376 or ucm@uclc.org

ith the semester heading into its final stretch Penn College, United Campus Ministry has been busy. We would like to thank Pastor Rob Manzinger, Rev. Ken Wagner-Pizza, Ross Judy, Jim Foran, Amanda Bair and Pastor Ken Elkin for leading our weekly Faith Talks this fall.

The annual Campus Ministry meeting was recently held at Shippensburg University. The main topic of conversation was the decreasing funding available for our campus ministry programs. In these tough economic times, everyone is feeling the pinch. We were told that some denominations could no longer provide funding. A few have decreased their giving, and one denomination said they will be able to

provide the same amount as last year! We are very thankful for these funds and do our best to be good stewards of what is provided. We will continue to supplement our program with bake sales, soup sales, and donations from local congregations. We are planning our soup sale for the second week of February. If anyone has a great soup recipe and would like to help UCM out, please let me know.

Our fall service project took place at Yokefellow Prison Ministry during fall break weekend. We helped to spruce up the house and make it ready for visitors. We were happy to sweep, mop, dust and if the weather was better, we also would have done windows.

Congratulations go to Joe Sewalk, a culinary student who recently completed his internship at LeJeune Chef. We're proud of you Joe, and we will miss you at UCM.

We are starting to make plans for our spring mission trip. We are heading to Philadelphia to work with the specific needs of the city. I will keep you posted on ways you can do to help us prepare for the trip.

I am starting to put the Faith Talk schedule together for the spring semester. Anyone with a heart for college students can lead a session or two, please let me know.

We will be preparing study bags for final exams that will take place in early December. The bags are filled with snacks, drinks, and prayers of encouragement to let the students know that someone is thinking about them while they prepare for finals. Congregations and individuals who would like to put together study bags or make donations for snacks will be most appreciated. Last year we were able to hand out over 100 study bags to students. They are like seeds you scatter, never knowing where they will end up, or the differences they make. If you have any study bags or items for the bags, we'd like to collect them by the end of November. I will be happy to pick them up.

Thought for the day: Trials are a part of life, we need to learn to expect them and we also need to expect to learn from them.

Thank you for all your continued support and pray that the students can live out their faith every day on campus.

CHURCH WOMEN UNITED *

Regina Gross, President - 322-2619

hristmas stockings will be assembled on Monday morning, November 14th beginning at 9 a.m. at Pine Street UMC, Wmspt., (free parking signs will be available in the church). Women are welcome to help assemble and package the 1200+ stockings that are distributed to area nursing homes for their residents.

SHEPHERD OF THE STREETS*



J. Morris Smith, Th. D.,

Contact at: 322-8568

THANKSGIVING FOR THE POOR

November 24th is a day when the nation is called to give thanks. Centered in God, celebrated in family, consecrated in the heart, we are called to give thanks for the blessings of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, to go beyond daily thanksgiving to probe deeper into our lives recalling and reflecting on our many blessings. As the old Gospel song says: "Name them one by one. Count your many blessings, see what God hath done."

In a land of plenty we give thanks for the food we eat, the clothes we wear, the house we have, the comforts of living afforded us, the car we drive, etc. As Children of God we give thanks for our salvation, for the Church, for the freedom of worship, for the availability of the Word of God, for our walk in the Kingdom with Jesus, the Son of God.

Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Poverty of spirit, self-denial, submission of our will to the Will of God, is the Way of holiness. *Holy*, to be set aside, sanctified for the purpose of God. To fulfill the purpose of God, to participate in the kingdom of heaven, requires holy poverty. Until we see ourselves as poor in the *things* of God, we are not truly thankful for them.

Jesus said, "Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. Store up treasure in heaven, for where your treasure is, there also will be your heart".

What we are most thankful for in our relation to God, is what we are most thankful for in our relation to one another...love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, mercy, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness. These are the Ways that God has treated us. These are His attributes. To be holy unto the Lord, we must willingly receive these gifts, unwrap them, and walk in them.

Consider giving thanks for the poor. It is by them we are taught how God treats us. None of God's grace did we earn, yet He loves us, delights in us, is patient, kind, generous, faithful, and gentle with us. He gives us mercy where none is deserved. It was in the field of the poor that Jesus taught these attributes to His disciples. He said, "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect...be merciful was your heavenly Father is merciful."

We thank God for the opportunity to possess what is needed for our living; let us thank God for the opportunity to have what is needed for our life. Let us be thankful that the poor give us the opportunity to store up treasure in heaven. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall be shown mercy".

The Robin Hood story is set in the context of the injustice of overtaxing all. Robin Hood took from the rich and gave it to the poor, thinking that such an end justified the means. Jesus taught the true and just means of distribution: "Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully, shall also reap bountifully." St. Paul built on this: "Each must do as he has decided in his heart, without reluctance or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all you need, you will abound to every good work. As it is written: 'He scatters abroad, He gives to the poor; His righteousness endures forever.'"

In the midst of Thanksgiving, give thanks for the poor. If it were not for them, we could not practice the attributes of God, we could not conduct ourselves as holy and godly, we could not reach the fullness of the stature of Christ: "I tell you the truth, whatever you do for one of the lest of these brothers of mine, you do for me".

DIAL - A - DEVOTION *

Have you called yet?

The number is 322-5762.

It's available 24 hours a day.



3

evotions 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 fall include:

11/7-13 Mrs. Sandy Grier

11/14-20 Mrs. Dorothy Wagner

11/21-27 Rev. Kathleen Ehrsam

11/28-12/4 Rev. Gwen Bernstine

12/5-11 Revs. James and Kathy Behrens

12/12-18 Rev. Dan Kovalak

Listen today and tell others about this ministry!

UNITED CHURCHES FOOD PANTRY

Gail Burkhart, Coordinator 322-1657

ovember is the 'official' start of the holidays. Where did the year go? It's important because these especially are the holidays dear to the heart of families. The true 'memory makers' most of us cherish. We have found, however, that for many families these are often not happy times, but one more difficult event for 'food insecure' families (that's PC and I kinda' like that better than 'those less fortunate' because that phrase always made me wonder how those words 'feel' to the folks in that situation).

Because many Thanksgiving dinners are served in our county, the Shepherd of the Streets will not be distributing Thanksgiving meal baskets to the 350+ families. With the economic downturn, and the flood relief, our pantry has had many inquires. But, the good news is, last year through your extremely generous donations, we were able to give all our clients enough 'fixins' for a celebratory meal <u>in addition</u> to their monthly food distribution! We weren't able to provide the turkey, but they had a good start to a great feast.

So, that's our goal for this year! Enough food (if folks just donate 1 extra item) that will make a special family time, in their own homes, for our clients. And the gratitude that reflects back from that is enormous!

Everyone feels the pinch when we shop, but you have been so incredibly caring all year long that we are thankful to each of you for all that you contribute to the peace of mind and the nurturing of souls of not only clients but volunteers as well! The Food Pantry can be a a joyous and exciting place to be and you all are a major part of that! May the Lord bless you and take good care of you.

The food we especially welcome this month are: green beans stuffing cranberry sauce canned yams canned or boxed mashed potatoes corn bread mix canned fruits dessert mixes cake mixes and frosting elbow macaroni saltine crackers microwave popcorn canned or powdered milk tea bags oatmeal packets baked beans ramen noodles powdered coffee creamer sugar (1 lb boxes) brown sugar pancake mix gravy

Due to a plumbing issue our pantry will be moving to a new location. We are in need of a <u>lockable file cabinet</u>.. On November 16th from 10-3 we will distribute food to our clients at St. Joseph the Worker Parish - Mater Dolorosa Parish Center, Park Avenue and Hepburn Street.

POVERTY - A FAITH-BASED RESPONSE*

from our Christian Social Concerns Committee

ou shall love your neighbor as yourself. (Matt
22:39) Love is central to the two great commandments in Matthew's Gospel. Love of God and love of neighbor. Who is our neighbor? Seven billion should be

our answer – the current global population figure. Of these 1.5 billion people live in extreme poverty, on less than \$1.25 a day. 24,000 children die every day from poverty, hunger, and preventable diseases. That's one child every 3.6 seconds. What are we doing to change systems to reduce and eventfully eradicate hunger and poverty? Are we living out the commandment to "...love your neighbor as yourself."

Lycoming County Unemployment Rate Increased in July: The preliminary rate of unemployment for Lycoming County for August 2011 was 8.2%. This is the fifth straight month of increase in local unemployment.

Poverty on the Rise – U.S. Census Data: Another 2.6 million people fell into poverty in 2010 according to September Census Bureau figures. (The poverty line in 2010 for a family of four was \$22,314.) The total number living under the official "poverty line" now totals 46.2 million. This is the highest number in the 52 years of Census Bureau reports. What is new in the data is that formerly middle-class households are falling as well.

What is 'Biblical Politics'?: A God of Justice: Jim Wallis in the current issue of Sojourners (Nov. 2011) states: "The scriptures reveal a God of justice, not only a God of charity. ... The subjects of the scriptures' concern are always the widow and the orphan, the poor and oppressed, the victims of courts or unscrupulous employers, debtors whose debts need to be forgiven, strangers in the land who need to be welcomed. ... fighting for justice, not partisan political goals, is the core of biblical politics – and that will continue to be our vocation at Sojourners." (and should be the vocation of all believers.) -Reprinted with permission from Sojourners, (800) 714-7474, www.sojo.net.

A Circle of Protection for Programs for the Poor: Many religious leaders have united to speak out for justice. "As Christians, we are called to fiscal responsibility and shared sacrifice. We also need to be committed to resist budget cuts that undermine the lives, dignity, and rights of poor and vulnerable people. Therefore, we need to join with others to form a Circle of Protection around programs that meet the essential needs of hungry and poor people at home and abroad. Budgets are moral documents, and how we reduce future deficits are historic and defining moral choices. As Christians, we need to urge Congress and the administration to give moral priority to programs that protect the life and dignity of poor and vulnerable people in these difficult times, our broken economy, and our wounded world. It is the vocation and obligation of the church to speak and act on behalf of those Jesus called 'the least of these.' This is our calling, and we will strive to be faithful in carrying out this mission." To read and sign visit www.circleofprotection.us

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

Sunday, November 20 -

Trinity United Methodist Church, Jersey Shore, will host their ministerium service at 7 p.m. The address is 1407 Allegheny St.

South Williamsport United Methodist Church, 601 Main St., will host their service at 7 p.m.

Lycoming College - Honors Hall at the corner of Basin and E. 4th Streets, Williamsport, will be the site of the service at 7:30 p.m. for the East End and Williamsport City Ministeriums. This Service will be an Interfaith of our National Celebration of Thanksgiving. There will be wonderful music, scripture, food and fellowship as together in faith we thank God for the blessings of life.

Wednesday, November 23 -

Trinity United Methodist Church, at 7 p.m. 1971 Lycoming Creek Road, Williamsport. by the Hepburn Lycoming Ministerium.

Muncy Baptist Church, Penn and Market Sts, will host their service at 7 p.m.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

ractical Tips for the Dementia Caregiver will be the theme of the Caregivers Support Group held Tuesday, Nov. 15 from 6:30 - 8 p.m. at Albright LIFE, 901 Memorial Ave. Wmspt. Clayton Jacobs, Outreach and Education Coordinator for the Alzheimer's Association/Greater PA Chapter will be the speaker. For details, or to be on the monthly meeting reminder list call 570-322-5433 and ask to speak to Fran or Allison.

CREATION CORNER

from our Christian Social Concerns Committee

he Marcellus Shale: Where Would Jesus Drill? What Would Jesus Frack? "The earth is the Lord's" (Psalm 24:1) we are told. The whole earth is filled with God's glory (Isaiah 6:3). Our responsibility, as tenants on his property, is to "tend and keep it" (Genesis 2:15). What is expected of us is to "do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God" (Micah 6:8). Inasmuch as Christ came to serve all creation, how are we to follow in His direction? As one hymnal offertory prayer puts it:"...we dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made...".

So how do we redeem that which has been drilled and fracked? How do we make whole that which has been broken? But wait: perhaps these are the wrong questions to ask, for as one secular quotation reminds us: "If they can get you asking the wrong questions, they don't have to worry about the answers" (attributed to Thomas Pynchon).

Maybe the more basic question is: Should we drill and frack the Marcellus Shale geologic deposits to exploit the natural gas that it holds? Do we need to?

5

Are we not to emphasize a more benign technology to secure and provide energy? Shouldn't we be developing renewable sources of wind, sun/solar and water/hydro to create less-polluting energy? What is the rush to promote gas? It isn't going anywhere. If we are the conservationists we claim to be, (we agree that we've all been environmentalists since the first Earth Day, 4/22/70, during the administration of Richard Nixon?), shouldn't there be a plan, akin to the Marshall Plan or Apollo Project, to weatherize all buildings with Pennsylvania-sourced insulation materials, installed by PA workers, so as to prevent the loss of energy in buildings that leak as sieves? Do we not want to equip our built environment with energy-efficient appliances, so that whatever our energy source is, it is used efficiently. Are we pushing a natural gas source of energy to a peak of such abundance that we will waste it, and sell it abroad, thus depriving future American generations of its availability to them?

We as humans are given a creative nature, cognitive brains, rational minds. We could employ our air, water and sun, conservation and efficiency toward a brighter non-polluting energy source future, one that does not jeopardize a sustainable future for generations to come. Dependence on a non-renewable fossil fuel with all its attendant negative consequences, seems to be the wrong policy direction to take. Is it greed (the rush to profit) and hubris (our "we've got it right" attitude) that prevents our state from placing at least a temporary ban, a moratorium, on this industry, so we might consider so many issues that have been raised? (see web sites below). To learn from Paul in his letter to the Romans 8:19-23, the whole creation has been groaning in travail, waiting to be set free from its bondage.

Notes: From the Pennsylvania Interfaith Power and Light group comes principles for considering an ethical analysis of Marcellus Shale drilling. See http://paipl.org/index files/marcellus.htm. From the (Pennsylvania) Citizens Marcellus Shale Commission (not the Governor's commission) comes "Marcellus Shale: A Citizens View" of October 2011. See http://pennbpc.org/sites/pennbpc.org/files/CMSC-Final-Report.pdf Testimony from over 100 persons in five statewide hearings attended by over 400 people explored the following issues, and the commission made findings and recommendations in the following areas: Frackwater Disposal, Air Pollution, Marcellus Shale and our Public Lands, Regulations Governing Natural Gas Drilling in PA, Property Rights, Pooling, & Eminent Domain, Aguifer Contamination, Water Withdrawal, Create Revenue Sources from Gas Extraction, Health Issues, Job Creation & Employment, Pipeline & Compressor Stations and Quality of Life.

YOKEFELLOW PRISON MINISTRY

6

Rev. Danesta (Nessie) Whaley, Council Director Contacts: 326-6868, smileynessie@yahoo.com

raw Near to God and HE will draw near to you!

[James 4:8] All of us have fallen short of the mark at one time or another in our lives. We have failed miserably and have disappointed others. But thanks be to our God who continues to love us anyway, even through all of our shortcomings. HE desires for each of us to draw near to HIM as HIS children.

Our recent statewide conference at the Best Western in Lewisburg drew us near to the throne of God and to one another. As we listened to each of our speakers share several nuggets of life, our hearts were pierced and challenged to draw near to our Faithful God who never fails.

The testimonies from two men in particular who changed their lives of crime to lives serving the Lord were so inspiring. These men shared how Yokefellow volunteers came in weekly to uplift and encourage their hearts assuring them of God's love for them.

All of us who attended, were challenged to continue going the 'extra mile' and that our labor was not in vain.

Yokefellow Prison ministry's purpose is to be a witness and light of our Christian faith to men and women of all races, denominations and nationalities. We serve needs of those in the correctional institutions by small group discussion weekly helping to bridge the gap between those confined and those on the outside community.

The men and women confined look forward with great anticipation to our volunteers sharing the good news with them each week and to let them know that God loves them even though they might have missed the mark. Yes, there is hope for every person as they draw near to God. Won't you be a part of the ministry with us? PLEASE:

- ▶ Pray for us.
- Give financially to meet the needs.
- ▶ Become a volunteer inside the prison walls or in the ministry.
- ► Call us today at 326-6868.

EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

igil for Altzheimer's will be held Wednesday, November 9th at 6:30 pm, at Pine Street United Methodist Church, 441 Pine Street, Williamsport. All are welcome to attend.

hristian Counselors at Cornerstone: The counseling department at Cornerstone Family Health exists to serve those with emotional and spiritual needs. We provide mental health care, with a Christian spiritual emphasis where desired (but are sensitive to those of dif-

fering faiths), to individuals, couples, and families throughout north central PA. Three licensed psychotherapists, Tim Bryant, PhD, LMFT, David Rising, EdD, and Kathy Hoppe, DMin, LMFT, provide counseling for a wide range of issues. We are available to anyone; you do not need to be a medical patient in the practice or any other FPC site. Our mission is to provide compassionate, Christ-centered, whole-person health care in partnership with our clients. Call 326-4118 or check us out on the web at www.cornerstonefamilyhealth.org

dinner to Benefit Flood Victims: A baked steak dinner will be held Saturday, November 12 at Montoursville Presbyterian Church, Elm and Walnut Sts. The cost is \$8 for adults and \$4 for children. Advanced tickets are recommended. Call 368-1847.

unch for Retirees: There is such a thing as a free lunch... and it is for those of us who are retired! It will be held Friday, November 18 at Montoursville Presbyterian Church, Elm and Walnut Streets, at noon. All retirees are welcome.

Memorial Tree Service will be held Wednesday, November 30 at 6:30 p.m. (registration at 5:30) at the James C. Maneval Funeral Home, Ltd. 500 W. 4th St. Wmspt. Families who have lost loved ones in recent years will be given the opportunity to place an Ornamental Dove, which carries the name of your loved one, on the tree. Kindly RSVP by Nov. 28 at 322-3204.

lternative Gift Fair: Penn College Human Services his hosting this event to give people the opportunity to give a gift and support local non-profits at the same time. It will be held Wednesday, Nov. 16 the from 1 pm - 7 pm, Thursday, Nov. 17, from 10 am - 6 pm and Friday, Nov. 18, from 9 am - 1 pm at the Penn College Bush Campus Center, One College Ave. Wmspt. You can shop online at GiftsThatGiveHope.org/williamsport. The giving of these gifts support these local non-profit organizations: North Centeral Sight Services, West House, NeedleWork Guild, Shepherd of the Streets, Favors Forward, Family Promise, Center for Independent Living, and CAPPA.

id's Day Coming: the Peter J. McGovern Little League Museum's Kids' Day event will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, March 24. It will be their 10th year and they want to make it extra special! They invite churches and organizations to join the museum, WVIA Public Media and Curious George for a few hours and share information about your organization! Contact Janice L. Ogurcak (570) 326-1921 x 280