



UNITED CHURCHES' NEWS

UNITED CHURCHES OF LYCOMING COUNTY
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POVERTY: A FAITH-BASED RESPONSE.....*The Christian Social Concerns Committee* *

For I was hungry and you gave me food (Mt 25:35.) Jesus makes clear that we are called to feed those who are hungry and be servants to those living in poverty. We are also called to advocate for changes to economic and political systems that contribute to the existence of hunger and poverty. Both charity and justice are required. How are we doing individually and collectively as people of faith?

Local School Lunch Programs Reveal Persistent Level of Need: The recently released data for the 2018-19 school year for Free and Reduced Lunch programs in county schools reveals a continuing high level of need for children. The overall county total of children receiving free or reduced lunch is 7,672 children. Wages need to improve so as to help families and their children.



School District	% Free Eligible	% Reduced Eligible	Total % 2019	Total % 2018
East Lycoming	32.5	3.8	36.5	35.3
Jersey Shore	42.3	6.3	48.6	50.3
Loyalsock	34.1	3.2	37.3	38.1
Montgomery	40.7	4.5	45.2	44.6
Montoursville	28.4	2.4	30.8	30.4
Muncy	35.5	4.5	40.0	38.2
South Williamsport	40.2	8.0	48.2	43.3
Williamsport	60.9	5.1	66.0	64.8

In charity we need to do more to support food pantries and other programs that assist families with children. In justice we need to advocate for strengthening programs focused on child nutrition, raise the minimum wage, and urge employers to provide a living wage. (Statistics are from the PA Department of Education.)

-continued on page 2

Living in Lycoming County: (Source: DATAUSA.IO)

- Median household income is \$48,731.
- Females earn on average \$38,131. Males earn 1.29 times that rate.
- The average wage distribution in the county is lower than the national average thus income inequality is higher locally.
- Lycoming County's poverty rate is 14.4% (The national poverty rate was 13.4% in 2017.)
- 80% of those living in poverty in Lycoming County are White.
- The largest group living in poverty is females aged 18-24, followed by females aged 25-34.

"Minimum wage" vs "living wage":

- The minimum wage is established by law either federal or states. Living wage is a term used to identify what income is needed to meet overall basic needs of food, housing, transportation, and health care.
- Minimum wage in Pennsylvania is \$7.25 per worker per hour. This rate was established in July 2009. If the rate were adjusted to inflation, it should be \$8.51. (Source: www.usinflationcalculator.com.)
- Estimated living wage for one adult in Lycoming County is \$11.19*.
- Estimated living wage for one adult and one child in Lycoming County is \$22.91 (www.livingwage.mit.edu.)

URGENTLY NEEDED *

Walker Bags and Catheter Bag Covers are urgently needed at area Nursing Homes. Church Women United did not receive enough at their recent ingathering to fill all the needs. Finished bags can be dropped off at United Churches office, 202 East Third St., or Pine Street United Methodist Church, 441 Pine St., both in Williamsport. Instructions for these items can be obtained from Pat Wittig, 570-322-4330.

**SPECIAL RESOURCES:**

Complimentary youth passes to The World of Little League Museum are available to be used in conjunction with church Easter Egg Hunts/Programs. Please contact Gwen at UCLC (director@uclc.org or 570-322-1110) by Thursday, 3/28, with the number of children 12 and under that you expect to take part. Provide your name, congregation and contact info, including address, the number of passes needed and the date of your program. Note: Children under 12 must be accompanied by a parent or other adult in the museum.

**THE PLACE TO BE FOR LUNCH WEDNESDAYS ***

Join us Wednesdays for lunch and an interesting program! The lunch line opens about 11:45 with a home cooked \$6 lunch, warm ecumenical fellowship and a thoughtful program designed to enrich your life mentally, physically, spiritually and socially. 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 United Churches 570-322-1110 helps preparations. To check on cancellations this winter call Gwen at 570-419-1464.

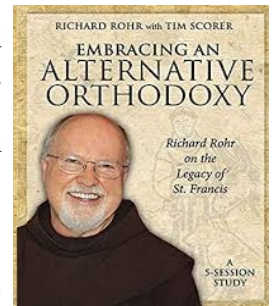
MARCH:***Lenten Series - with the Williamsport Ministerium***

Embracing An Alternative Orthodoxy, A Five Study Series With Richard Rohr on the Legacy of St. Francis

- 13- **Rev. Ken Wagner-Pizza**, Pastor, Trinity Episcopal Church, "*Atonement Theology*"
- 20- **Rev. Gwen Bernstine**, United Churches of Lycoming County, "*Eco-Spirituality*"
- 27- **Rev. Jeffrey LeCrone**, Interim Pastor, St. Luke Lutheran Church, "*The Cosmic Christ*"

APRIL:

- 3- **Rev. James West**, Interim Pastor, St. Mark's Lutheran Church, "*Orthodoxy and Orthopraxy*"
- 10- **Rev. Brian VanFossen**, Pastor, St. Joseph the Worker Parish, "*Mysticism over Moralism*"
- 17- **Rev. Brad Walmer**, Pastor, New Covenant United Church of Christ, "*Holy Week Timeline*"
- 24 - **Mr. Tom Wetzel**, Local Pianist, "*Salute to Spring*" Plan to attend! Bring a friend! It's for regular folks like you and me! Join us this week!

**CLASSIFIED ADS**

Two Part-time Positions for Faxon-Kenmar United Methodist Church, 1301 Clayton Ave., Williamsport, PA.

Administrative Assistant

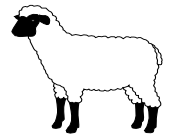
Financial Secretary

Excellent documented secretarial and computer skills required. If interested, go to www.faxonkenmar.org for Position Descriptions and Application details.

Downtown Parking Available: St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 142 Market St., Williamsport, has parking spaces for rent. Numbered spots behind the church or in the lot on Via Bella are available for weekday use at \$25/month. Contact them at 570-323-4619, stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org, or on Facebook.

SHEPHERD OF THE STREETS*

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



Charity

Over the centuries of Christianity, the word “charity” has gained six definitions, all of which have significant impact on Christian thought and accountability. The Latin word, *caritas*, has had an interesting journey: costliness, esteem, affection. Jerome in the 4th century translated the New Testament Koine Greek into Latin (The Vulgate), meaning common or usual; that which is in common use. Koine Greek was the “street Greek” of the early church, a common language, while Latin was the more formal language of Rome. Often he used *caritas* to translate the Greek word *agape*, which is a strong rendering of “love”. Jerome set the theology of charity when he did this. (In the New World Dictionary of American English, look at the various definitions. 1) The love of God for man, and man for man. 2) An act of good will or affection. 3) The feeling of good will; benevolence. 4) Kindness or leniency in judging others. 5) A voluntary giving of money or other kind of help to those in need, an institution or other recipient of such help. 6) A welfare institution, organization or fund.) Obviously, Christianity embraces all of these definitions and most of us use all of them.

Agape has God as its objective, aim, and purpose (God is love.) It is obvious, then, that when we speak of charity, we speak of God’s love and in the context of the actions divine love prompts. Love is not found in the objects of charity, but it is a personal deliberate exercise of the will. The charitable act does not make the object lovable or loving, nor does it necessarily improve on the person’s need for It. Love, to be full orbled, must be given, received and returned. God loves us whether we accept His Love or not and there is little connect with God until we do. For those who have united with God through His Son live in the Spirit of God. Therefore, this divine love is a fruit of the spirit that impels charity, and creates culpability when ignored.

Love is indifferent, that is, it is intellectually detached from the reasons a person is in need and does not judge the qualification of the need for charity. Indeed, he cannot presume that he is acting in the love of God. Those who lived by the charity of others, especially in the medieval church, would ask alms “for the Love of God.” Charity is a measure of our receiving God’s Love and returning It.

Lent is a time of soul-searching, a time to reexamining one’s conscience relative to righteousness and duty to God, a time of fasting, prayer and charity as we prepare for the most stupendous act of charity in the history of the world: the Gift of God’s Love, once and for all, to meet deepest needs of humanity. Therefore, our charity is regulated by

the Love of God, not our love for him or for one other.

Thank you for your donation of hygiene items, baby needs, and/or bedding. The list follows:

- Toothpaste a Toothbrushes*
- Shaving Cream and Razors*
- Shampoo and Conditioner*
- Women’s Hygiene Products*
- Towels and Wash Cloths*
- Bedding and Blankets*



- Tissues and Toilet Paper and Paper Towels*

<i>Soap</i>	<i>Deodorant</i>	<i>Combs</i>
<i>Baby Diapers</i>	<i>Baby Shampoo</i>	<i>Baby Oil</i>
<i>Baby Q-Tips</i>	<i>Baby Wipes</i>	<i>Baby Powder</i>

EDUCATIONAL EVENT *

Healing Communities Day of Training: April 13, 2019
Did you know that....

- 25% of the working age population in America has a criminal record. There are also millions of victims.
- One in 104 American adults is currently incarcerated.
- One in 110 white children and one in 15 African American children have a parent incarcerated.
- It is likely that every church has victims, offenders, and their families in their congregations. Shame and stigma prevent people from sharing or seeking help.

Healing Communities Training is designed to assist churches in ministering to all those impacted by crime (offenders, victims, and their families) beginning with your own congregations. It will help churches to:

- Begin talking about the impact of crime and the need for healing among its members.
- Reduce the stigma and shame associated with crime.
- Create a culture of safety and support.
- Connect offenders and victims to area resources.
- Provide spiritual support and build relationships.

The training will be held Saturday, April 13th from 8:30 to 4:30 at New Covenant UCC, 202 E 3rd St., Wmspt. The cost is \$25/person including lunch and materials or \$60 for groups of three from the same church or organization. The instructor will be Marty McCormick, a retired counselor who is serving as a volunteer chaplain at Clinton County Correctional Facility. For details or to register contact Marty at 570-745-7210 or marty7210@gmail.com today.

FOOD PANTRY *

Mona Rudio, Coordinator 570-322-1657

E-mail - foodpantry@uclc.org



Winter is on the way out and we are all getting ready to welcome the nicer weather Spring brings! It is the time of year we look forward to getting out and giving others in the community a helping hand with food, a spring clean-up, and obtaining the necessities of life. Spring to life filled with love for all, treating your neighbor as you want to be treated when you are going through a difficult time. Practice your gift of hospitality.

FOOD ♥ PANTRY



During Lent we are to be living Christ-like lives. Listen to your inner Spirit guiding you. Give a little and you will receive a lot more from above!

This winter there has been a variety of needs in the households who come to our pantry. Some have been laid off, others experience loss of work, higher utility bills, health needs, etc. Our communities help in many ways. Here at the Pantry we provide them with a variety of food items to choose from. Make an effort this Lenten season to contribute to help provide food for those who are food insecure. Your hospitality and love are greatly appreciated by all!! We are currently most in need of these items:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| Boxed Potatoes | Oatmeal | Pasta |
| Tomato Sauce | Healthy Snacks | Cereal |
| Ramen Noodles | Canned Vegetable (all kinds) | |
| Condiments | Microwavable Entrees | |

Our location is 320 Park Avenue at the rear entrance. Our days of service are as follows...

- Monday: 9-12 for donations
- Tuesday: 10:15-2:30 clients
- Thursday: 10:15-2:30 clients

Thanks for calling, visiting and volunteering! God Bless you! Have a wonderful, loving, and peaceful Lent season.

There is still time for you to get you order in for our Campus Ministry's Annual Soup Sale.....

Soup Sale for United Campus Ministry
 Donation: \$7.00 per quart
 (Checks payable to "United Churches Campus Ministry")
 All soup freshly homemade then frozen.

Order Form

Type	Quantity
Beef and Barley.	_____
Chicken Corn Chowder.	_____
Chicken and Wild Rice.	_____
Chili	_____
Ham and Bean.	_____
Hot Sausage and Shrimp Gumbo	_____
Italian Wedding.	_____
Potato with Chicken and Rivals	_____
Spinach, Sausage and Tomato Tortellini	_____
Tomato	_____
Vegetable Beef Soup	_____
Total Quarts ordered: _____ x \$7.	\$ _____

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Phone Number: _____
 or _____

Mail checks and order form to Tammey Aichner, 1325 Mansel Ave., Williamsport, PA 17701. Orders are needed by March 17th. Quantities limited, first ordered, first served. Delivery will be between April 1st - 7th. Tammey will contact you to arrange delivery. Soup will be delivered frozen. All proceeds go toward our Campus Ministry.



DIAL - A - DEVOTION *

Have you called yet?
The number is 570-322-5762.
It's available 24 hours a day.



Devotions are three minutes or less, change week-days and once on the weekend, and are designed to lift your spirits and help you to have "A Closer Walk with God." The devotionalists coming up are:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 3/11-17 Mrs. Tiffany Haller | 3/18-24 Mrs. Gail Landers |
| 3/25-31 Overseer Bernice Conxum | 4/1-7 Pastor Tammey Aichner |
| 4/8-14 Ms. Connie Couture | 4/15-21 Ms. Pat Jenkins |

Listen today - And share this resource with a friend!

We've had a great response so far on soup orders! This is our only UCM fundraiser and we appreciate the support!

We've been busy on campus with Bible Studies, prayer groups and Jesus and Java. Pastor Brad joined us Wednesday to impose ashes for anyone wishing to receive them. **Thanks** to all the pastors and churches who have led a Bible study this semester. We couldn't do it without you!

Students are now on Spring Break. Soon we'll plan a Good Friday service and a Spring Open House presentation. Please keep them in prayer. Some of them don't go home to a welcoming circle of Christian friends & family.

CREATION CORNER**Christian Social Concerns Committee****April 2019: Earth Month and Other Dates**

April 28 - May 5 The 64th Annual Observance of Soil and Water Stewardship Week and Sunday. The theme is "Life in the Soil: Dig Deeper." Sponsored by the National Association of Conservation Districts, both secular and religious education materials are available (grades K-8 booklets and activity guides, church leader guide and liturgy, etc.). Also see the spring issue of YES magazine cover story "Beautiful Dirt" (nine articles) and the book Growing a Revolution: Bringing Our Soil Back to Life, by David R. Montgomery.

April 26 National Arbor Day celebrated annually the last Friday of April. For your mental environment, google "think like a tree": grow roots, branch out, soak up the sun, weather storms, be graceful in the wind, etc.

April 22 Earth Day national day of service. The theme is "Next Generation Rising" with an emphasis for children and youth to help protect, restore, and more rightly share God's creation. Included resources are a Bible study, sermon starter, liturgical and action materials. Also see reflections on the youth generation's Juliana vs. U.S. lawsuit at #eachgeneration.

Related sites: Global Climate Strike; Fridays for the Future; Youth for Climate; Greta Thunberg.

Note that the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, founded in 1970, will occur next year, 2020.

April 20 BP oil rig explodes in Gulf of Mexico, 2010

March 31 Cesar Chavez Day (farm workers and health issues)

March 30 Turn Off Your Lights for Earth Hour, Saturday 8:30 p.m., sponsored by World Wildlife Foundation.

March 28 40th anniversary of partial meltdown of PA Three Mile Island nuclear plant, 1979

March 22 World Water Day

March 15 International Day for a Climate Strike (organized by youth)

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES *

Habitat volunteers needed. The plumbing, drywall and mudding are complete. They now need volunteers to help make the house a home. Construction takes place every Wednesday and Saturday and you can come solo or form a group. Training is provided as needed. For more information contact Ellen Williams at 570-322-2515 x 304 or ellen.williams@lycominghabitat.org.

***** NOTE THE DATE *****

Wendy's Fundraiser for UCLC - April 29 - 5-8 Maynard St

Don't Be Fooled – Hunger is No Joke! You can help by working at the Meal Packaging Event at St. Mark's Lutheran Church on Saturday, April 6. Locally, 4,700 (1 in 6) children in Lycoming County struggle with food insecurity (www.feedingamerica.org). The goal is to package 20,000 meals of pasta with tomato basil sauce to distribute to local food pantries. Two shifts are available, 9 and 10:15 a.m. To volunteer call 570-323-4619 or email outreach@stmarkswilliamsport.org. Together we can make a difference.

**EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITY ***

An Organ Recital will be presented by members of the Williamsport Chapter, American Guild of Organists, on Sunday, March 24, 4 p.m., at Covenant-Central Presbyterian Church, 807 W. 4th St. The theme is "Then and Now", music learned early in our studies that has stood the test of time.

Family Night Worship will be held at the WAHS Auditorium on Saturday, April 20 from 7-8:30. The Petros Club is hosting this free event open to everyone. The Liberty Initiative will be sharing a word of hope especially for high school generation. Contact Rebecca Spencer, student pastor at Faith Wesleyan Church, Wmspt. for details at 570-322.3547 or rebecca1faith@comcast.net.

The Renew Service is new at Messiah Lutheran, SW. Held the first Saturday monthly, at 6 PM in the sanctuary it features contemporary Christian music and is a relaxed, come-as-you-are service. Everyone is welcome to experience this service www.messiahsouth.org

Bowl For Kids Sake with Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Bridge at Faxon Lanes in Williamsport on Saturday afternoon April 13th. Register online at www.bbbsnepa.org or call 570-433-3193.

Passover Seder Meal will be held on Wednesday, April 17, at 6:15 pm., in St. Marks Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall. To join them make a reservations at 570-323-4619 or stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org

Annual Lenten Soup Sale and Luncheon is back on Thursdays now through April 11 from 11-1 at the Episcopal Church of Our Saviour, 31 N Loyalsock Ave., Montoursville. Soup \$5/quart. Homemade Vegetable Soup, Baked Beans, Pies, Hamburg BQ etc.

Victorian Tea: Sunday, April 28 at 2 pm at Trinity Episcopal Church, 844 W 4th St, Wmspt. A \$15 donation includes tea, sandwiches and savories, drinks, and traditional British sweets. This year's theme is Mary Poppins! Fanciful or character attire encouraged. Ticket auction & door prizes. For tickets: 570-322-0126.

United Churches has served our community for seventy three years. It is truly a ministry that focuses on the entire community. Never has this been more clear than with the overwhelming response for our 8th Annual Golf Tournament. We encourage you to support these businesses and organizations as they have supported us.

2018

FOUNDING MEMBER TOURNAMENT SPONSORS

These wonderful sponsors have been with us since the very first year!!!

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Kades Margoles - PSEA endorsed company for retirement and investment planning - Ken Weiss & Jason Hurwitz		

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Tony's Delicatessen	Little League Baseball	Dolly's Diner, Wmspt.
Neil Bixler	The Old Corner Hotel	China Café
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