



Ecumenical Encounters

**Inside this issue:
December 2008**

Executive Director's Message	1
LCCC Interfaith in Action Food Drive	2
Be a Daybreak Angel	3
Justice & Advocacy Lay Rep Training	4
A Moment of Thanks from Linkage	4
Announcing 2009 Week of Prayer	4
Winter Needs for Linkage	4
Welcome Back Deb	5
Christmas Dinners	5
LIHEAT Keeps It Warm	5
Cooking for the	5
LCCC Monthly Tour	6
Aspire Support Committee Wants You!	6
Souper Bowl of Caring	6
Lay Rep Training	7
2009 Lenten Concert Series	7
Campbell Lectures Save the date	7
Peace Pilgrimage	8

And The Word Became Flesh and Lived Among Us

By the Rev. Dr. Christine L. Nelson, Executive Director

And the word became flesh and lived among us... John 1:14

What then should we do? Luke 3:10

If there is ever a time in which we should not think we can rely on how things performed in the past, it is now! Oil, gas, the stock market, banks, the housing market, nothing is following historical patterns. It seems as if the whole world is upside down.

Bad economic times such as these make us feel we are being consumed by forces beyond our control, and we are. The greatest minds, the sharpest economists and financiers cannot tame Wall Street or the price of rice. So Main Street must return to basic values, finding a way to have the necessities of life for ourselves and our neighbors.


In times like these John the Baptist provides a direct answer to our fearful, "What should we do?"

- *Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none*
- *Whoever has food must do likewise*
- *Collect no more than the amount prescribed to you*
- *Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusations*
- *Be satisfied with your wages*

Luke 3:10-14

(Continued on page 1)



LCCC CALENDAR OF EVENTS	December 6 Pathways 20th Anniversary	January 25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity	February 5 Aspires Mentor of the Year
	 December 13 Nazareth to Bethlehem Peace Pilgrimage	February 1 Souper Bowl of Caring	February 25 Lenten Series Begins

And the Word Became Flesh, Cont'd

Pretty simple isn't it? Sharing and being satisfied with the basics of life. It's what we learned in kindergarten. Can we relearn these lessons and apply them to our grown up world? God believes we can. Why else would God have come in the form of a baby?

A baby needs, yes, is dependent on others to survive. To become fully human means we recognize our dependence on others as a good thing, a normal facet of life. We grasp that to come together as a community, as people of faith, means we must not only provide food and coats for others, but in a sense, become food for others.

Right here in the Lehigh Valley 80,000 people struggle with hunger.

- 21,000 rely on emergency food providers like food pantries
- 50% are children
- Second Harvest Food Bank serves 26,000 people/month
- 40,000 get food stamps
- Soup Kitchens are serving 300 people a day
- \$250 million spent in 10 county area on food supports

This morning and many mornings for the past two months the lines outside the Conference of Churches ran all the way up Chew St. and around the corner and we had to turn away 30 people knowing we could only handle 50. When I passed the Salvation Army yesterday afternoon, I saw the same phenomena.

I am thankful that our community has been responding. Congregations and businesses not only share food they have gathered, but share themselves in serving meals, passing out food, volunteering, and advocating for more of our tax dollars to be used to feed and shelter struggling people.

Mother Teresa says, "The Eucharist is incomplete if it does not lead us to service and love of the poor." In communion Jesus offers himself under the appearance of bread. May we do the same.

2008 ANNUAL APPEAL

Unemployment is at a 14 year high.

The winter heating season has begun.

The lines are growing at the

Soup Kitchen and at Pathways.

As the holidays approach, remember your neighbors most in need by making your Annual Appeal donation to the LCCC. We promise to be worthy stewards of your generosity.

If you wish your gift to be recorded in 2008, we must receive it by January 9th.

Have a happy, healthy holiday season.

Do you need to make some extra money?

Experienced Child Care providers are needed to provide child care during the ASPIRES Very Important Parents program for pregnant and parenting teens in the Lehigh Valley. There is 1 position available and the job pays \$8 an hour. The program is held on Wednesdays from 5pm-8pm. contact Missy Wise at 484-664-7320 x17 or email: mwise@lccconfchurch.org

LCCC Interfaith In Action Food Drive Ends With Thanksgiving Blessings

In spite of the recent economic upheaval, many people will be counting their blessings this Thanksgiving. This is largely due to the fact that congregations and organizations participated in LCCC's Interfaith In Action food drive. In July LCCC began asking congregations and organizations to educate themselves on hunger issues and donate to food programs. Groups like Neffs UCC, the Knights of Columbus and Muhlenberg College together donated over 3,518 lbs of perishable food items and \$511 in cash. This enabled them to provide 5.5 tons of food to hungry families. Pastor Sharon Joseph of Church of the Manger weighed in that her congregation collected more food than they ever anticipated. Their food and cash donation enabled them to provide almost 8000 lbs for Second Harvest.

Weigh In Against Hunger will end at the end of November and the total food and cash donated will be reported in early December. To date about 50 groups participated by donating food, money, and school supplies to help area feeding programs. Turkey day will come and go but donations are still needed. In the days ahead many people will be able to give thanks for the food they are receiving because congregations and organizations Weighed In Against Hunger.

LCCC Announces Formation of Ecumenical Youth Choir

Pastors, Youth Leaders, and Parents LCCC is inviting Christian youth ages 12-18 to participate in an ecumenical youth choir. The choir will minister at the 2009 LCCC unity service. Over the past four years, the youth choir has enriched the lives of a growing number of young people. Some youth have forged new friendships cross culturally and continue to worship together on occasion. The choir is a culturally diverse group of young people from Lehigh and Northampton counties. They have many things in common including an enjoyment of Christian music and a love for Jesus. Rehearsals are open to interested youth on the following dates:

Rehearsal dates:

**Jan. 11th & Jan. 18th – 6 to 7:00 pm;
Jan. 25th – 3:00 pm**

Location:

**St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church,
1933 Hanover Ave. Allentown**

For more information and to receive the words to the songs, please contact:
The Conference at 610-433-6421 or
Rick Focht at 610-706-0686.

Faith! A "Clash" of the Valley Choirs

Saturday, January 31st, 7:30pm

(Snow date: Feb. 22, 2009)

**Allentown Symphony Hall, 6th and Linden
Streets, Allentown**

To kick off Black History month LCCC, PA Sinfonia, City of Allentown, and the Allentown Symphony Association will host a friendly choir competition and concert. All choirs are invited to participate by presenting various styles of gospel music. There will be:

- Regionally and locally known judges
- Awards for best performance
- Audience involvement
- To participate contact PA Sinfonia Orchestra at 610-434-7811 or email PSOBoxoffice@verizon.net.
www.PASinfonia.org



**Vision Misionera
Will host a Community
Christmas Concert**
on
Friday, December 12, 2008
7:00pm to 9:00pm
at
Dubbs Memorial UCC
455 W. Allen St. Allentown

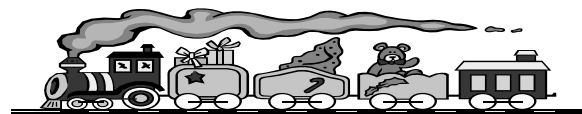
Daybreak Holiday Angel Program 2008



'Tis the season! Once again, Daybreak is asking for your support to help make the holidays brighter for people with mental health concerns.

The ground rules: Our volunteer members at Daybreak will "wish" for three items with a value of up to \$25.00 combined. They will also be wishing for 1-\$25 item. You, as a Daybreak "Angel", agree to purchase one or more items for the list or 1-\$25 item. The value of the total purchase should not exceed \$25.00. Angel gifts are due, wrapped with the name of "your" Daybreak member on a tag, by December 8th.

Please contact Christine Morrison or Susan Unger at 610-820-5049 if you are interested in becoming an ANGEL!



TOY ALERT!

Pathways needs toys for children 5 to 13 for Christmas distribution. Call Deanne at 610-439-8653 for more information.

St. Peter's Lutheran To Host LCCC Annual Prayer Service

1933 Hanover Avenue, Allentown

January 25, 2009, 4:00pm

The pastor and congregation of St. Peter's Lutheran have opened their doors to host LCCC 2009 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Service. The prayer service is a great opportunity for Christian brothers and sisters to fellowship with one another. The Service will feature The Rev. Gordon Sommers as guest preacher, a dynamic youth choir accompanied by SWiM a local contemporary Christian band.

The unity prayer service has become a valley wide celebration that encourages Christians from different denominations, ethnic groups, and worship styles to fellowship with one another. In anticipation for the service, St. Peter's will be assisting with music distribution and food for the fellowship hour. A group of East Side Allentown churches and clergy will be asked to support the service for a good turnout. Everyone is welcome to attend. For more information call the Conference office at 610-433-6421.

A Moment of Thanks from Linkage

If you have ever lost your wallet or can not find sensitive information, you might wonder who you should call to make sure you and your accounts are protected. The Lehigh County Conference of Churches Linkage Street Outreach program helps our county's homeless population rebuild their lives by establishing or re-establishing their legal identification. This first step towards self-determinacy is of vital importance. Imagine not being able to take a job, apply for healthcare, drive a car, rent a hotel room, write a check, or respond to any request to prove your identity.

Great appreciation is extended to State Senator Pat Browne's office for the understanding of the importance of this particular need and their continual support of our community. A special thank you to Lee dePaula, Urban Affairs Liaison in Pat Browne's office. Because of the partnership between the Lehigh County Conference of Churches and Pat Browne's staff, assistance is provided so that people in need can obtain proper forms of identification and then be eligible to acquire the appropriate services that they are entitled to receive.

If you or someone you know needs help getting a PA birth record, a copy of a PA driver's license or State Photo ID, you may contact Lee dePaula at State Senator Pat Browne's office at 801 Hamilton Street Allentown PA 18101 or by phone at 610-281-8468.

Attention: Youth Pastors and Youth Groups

Each year ASPIRES holds a Holiday Party for the participants in the program. A gift is given to each student and for some students it is the only gift they will receive. Last year Asbury United Methodist's youth group gave \$50 toward the party as well as purchased gifts for 35 ASPIRES students. This year Asbury has offered to do the same. Due to ASPIRES growth we are now looking for 2 additional youth groups to match Asbury's generosity. If your youth group would like to participate or for more information please contact Missy Wise at 484-664-7320 x17 or email: mwise@lccconfchurch.org

Winter Needs for Linkage

Winter is here again and many do not have proper clothing and outerwear to cope with the winter weather. The following items are in need for the Linkage program, and these items can be slightly worn or new, in men's sizes medium, large, extra large, and 2X large: coats, sweatshirts, jeans, sweat-pants, socks, winter hats, and gloves. Cell phones with the chargers are also needed for emergency situations. The Linkage program expresses thanks for all donated items.

The Lehigh County Conference Of Churches Soup Kitchen

Is Open And Serving This Holiday Season



The Soup Kitchen Committee is collecting items for Christmas personal care bags for those in need.

- Bar Soap • Razors
- Deodorant
- Shaving Cream
- Shampoo • Combs
- Hand Lotion
- Small Hand Towels
- Tooth Paste
- Tooth Brushes
- Female Hygiene Products
- Gloves, Hats and Socks

Baby Items

- Lotion
- Diapers

For Children

In addition to personal care items, it would be nice to include a small gift... like crayons, a coloring book, a puzzle, etc.

This message sponsored by

J.S. Burkholder Funeral Home, Inc. is a drop off point for items. Please make donations Monday through Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm

J.S. Burkholder Funeral Home, Inc.

Michael A. Weber, Owner-Supvr. Sonya Siegfried, General Manager

16th & Hamilton Sts., Allentown • 610-433-5161

www.burkholderfuneral.com



Cooking for the Conference

The Lehigh County Conference of Churches will serve over 60,000 meals in 2008, 50% more than in 2004.


Our Neighbors Living in Poverty Need Your Help!

As you begin setting up your event calendar for the coming year, we know that many of you will be planning spaghetti dinners, pancake breakfasts, bake sales, strawberry festivals and the like. Why not cook for the Conference? Schedule a new event or set aside a traditional one in April of 2009. That way, we can use the proceeds to provide for the food, shelter, and other needs of the 25,000 people in Allentown and more across the region that live in poverty.

We'll be happy to provide a speaker beforehand to discuss the need with your congregation, school or club.

We'll be happy to publicize your event in our print and electronic newsletters.





Cold Weather Is Coming Linkage Needs

Men's slightly worn used clothing, especially:

- Jackets
- Gloves
- Hats
- Socks
- Long underwear

Did You Know that **Dangerous Weather Alerts** are called when the temperature reaches 20 degrees F or lower (this is actual temperature or wind chill).

When an alert is called, the Allentown Rescue Mission remains open for men. Women are permitted to stay in the lobby of the Salvation Army for the night.

Linkage plays a special role in visiting encampments and encouraging homeless persons to go to these shelters.

Welcome Back Deb!

My name is Deb Pavan, and I am the Housing Case Manager for HUD, where I will provide housing counseling and support to disabled and chronically homeless adults. Although I am new to Pathways as a Housing Case Manager, I am no stranger to the Lehigh County Conference of Churches: I was part of the Daybreak team from 2002 - 2007. It's so great to be back at LCCC, and I look forward to working with the staff and volunteers again! I can be reached in the morning on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and in the afternoon on Mondays and Thursdays.

When I'm not busy working, I'm busy at home with my husband and our soon-to-be 2 year old daughter.

Christmas Dinners



The Spirit of the Lehigh Valley
At the Holiday Inn Fogelsville
Wednesday, December 24th, 2008
(transportation available, must call to reserve)

Please check the LCCC website for updates to the upcoming area holiday dinners

www.lccconfchurch.org

LIHEAT KEEPS IT WARM

The Pennsylvania Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps low income people pay their heating bills through home heating energy assistance grants and crisis grants. You need not have an unpaid bill to receive home heating energy assistance. You can receive this money without being in the Cash Assistance program—a family of four with an annual income of up to \$44,443 can qualify for assistance. No lien is placed on your property if you receive this help. The program starts November 3rd. To sign up or get more information, call the Allentown Department of Welfare at 610-821-6509.

Fighting Hunger, Sheltering the Homeless, Through



Last year, the LCCC served 60,000 meals in Daybreak and the Soup Kitchen, 15,000 more meals than in 2003. Last October, 3,000 meals were served at our Soup Kitchen. This October, we served 3,600 meals. This summer, we served 61% more meals to children than a year ago. *The war against hunger is truly mankind's war of liberation.* *-[John F. Kennedy](#)*

February 1, 2009

Follow these steps:

- Step 1. Sign up to collect donations at your church/organization during the month of January and on February 1st.
- Step 2. Mail/bring in money raised by February 16th, 2009
- Step 3. Call us if you have any questions 610 433-6421
- Step 4. Congratulations! And THANK YOU! You have helped to make life's road for the hungry and the homeless an easier one to travel.

REGISTRATION FORM

Fill out this registration form and mail to Lehigh County Conference of Churches
534 Chew St. Allentown, PA 18102, fax the form to 610 439-8039,
or **Call the Conference at 610 433-6421**. For Information: www.lcconfchurch.org

Lehigh County Conference of Churches
SOUPER BOWL 2009

Church/Organization _____

Contact _____

Address _____

State _____ *Zip code* _____

Telephone _____ *Fax* _____

E-mail _____

ATTEND LCCC'S MONTHLY TOUR
December 18, 2008, 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM
534 Chew Street, Allentown
Call 610.433.6421

The ASPIRES Support Committee WANTS You!
Help Lehigh Valley Youth. Meets 2nd Tuesday at
6pm at the Mentor Center, 544 Hamilton Street.
Call Missy Wise 484-664-7320



Ecumenical News

Lay Representative Training: Ministry and Service In the Church and Beyond

December 11th, 10:00a – 12:00p

LCCC Satellite Site, 544 Hamilton Street

Would you like to know what lay reps do to help their congregations develop effective outreach ministries? Feel free to attend this session on developing goals for ministry and opportunities to serve. All lay reps are required to attend one training per year to better understand the mission and ministry of the Conference. Register by contacting Tanean Schaller at tschaller@lccconfchurch.org or 484-664-7320; or the LCCC main office at 610-433-6421. Future Training Dates and times are:

- March 12 2009, 10a-12p
- June 11, 2009, 10a-12p
- September 10, 2009, 10a-12p
- December 10, 2009, 10a-12p

Lehigh County Conference of Churches

Presents

2009 Noontime Lenten Concert Series

Lift Every Voice In Changing Economic Seasons

- Wednesdays February 25th thru April 8th, 11:55am – 12:30pm
- Zion's Reformed UCC, 6th and Hamilton Mall, Allentown
- The concert series will feature the music of African American hymn writers.
- Performances by local gospel artists and classical singers accompanied by some of the areas finest organists and musicians.
- For more information contact Rev. Hepburn at 484-664-7320 or dhepburn@lccconfchurch.org.

CAMPBELL LECTURES ON CHRISTIAN UNITY

THURSDAY, MARCH 26

SAVE THE DATE

The Rev. Ian T. Douglas, Ph.D., will deliver the Campbell Lectures of the Lehigh County Conference of Churches on Thursday, March 26, at Moravian Theological Seminary, Bethlehem. The program, 4:00 to 9:00 p.m., includes two lectures and dinner. Program details and registration information will be available shortly.

The mission of the Campbell Lectureship is to inform the Christian community and the wider public of the lasting significance and enduring importance of Christian unity. The lectures have been held annually since 1993. Speakers of international reputation are chosen by a committee from diverse traditions committed to intellectual excellence. The Campbell Lectures Committee plan and implement the lectures in memory of Robert K. Campbell, a former Chief Executive Officer of PPL and devout ecumenist who actively encouraged Christian unity.

Rev. Douglas is a passionate advocate for God's mission of justice, compassion and reconciliation within Anglicanism and ecumenically. He is currently Chair of the Boston Theological Institute's International Mission and Ecumenism Commission, is a member of the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church and the Council's clergy representative to the Anglican Consultative Council. He is a founder of Episcopalians for Global Reconciliation.

**LCCC Launches New
Affiliate Web Site**
Link Up for Justice at <http://ja.pppjr.org>



Lehigh County Conference of Churches
534 Chew Street
Allentown, PA 18102

December 2008

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



Ecumenical Encounters
December, 2008
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Conference of Churches

*The Rev. Dr. Christine L. Nelson,
Executive Director*

*Ira Faro,
Development Senior Director*

*Tom Smith,
Operations Director*

*Tom Walker,
Human Services Director*

*The Rev. Debra Hepburn,
Ecumenical Director*

*Carol Closson,
The Rev. William Seaman,
Executive Directors Emeritus*

United Way of the
Greater Lehigh Valley



Walkers Wage Peace In Time of Conflict



December 13, 2008, 10:45am

520 E. Broad Street, Bethlehem

If you would like to live in a more peaceful society and are committed to working towards that end, you are invited to join the **49th Annual Peace Pilgrimage**. The walk will bring together people from different faiths and backgrounds to help raise the community's awareness of the necessity of peace making. Modeled after Mary and Joseph's journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, organizers believe that Christ came to bring peace on earth and that people must live in peace with one another. More than 300 people embarked upon this journey in '07. A greater turnout is expected this year.

Buses will leave the Bechtel Building in Bethlehem at 10:45am in route for Nazareth Moravian Church. The 10 mile journey will begin with rest stops and refreshments along the way. The Pilgrimage will end with a light meal at Christ UCC, Market & Center Streets, Bethlehem. Guest speaker is **Janet Chisholm**, Peace, Justice and Training Coordinator at Kirkridge Retreat and Study Center. Her speech is entitled "Walking Away From Fear." For more information contact Fran Dreisbach at 610-258-7373 or the Conference main office at 610-433-6421. Register online at www.peacewalk.org. Everyone is welcome.

Lehigh County Conference of Churches

Email: lccc@lccconfchurch.org

Telephone: 610-433-6421

Fax: 610-439-8039

www.lccconfchurch.org