



Ecumenical Encounters

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SPRING IN THE SOIL AND OUR SOULS

By Rev. Dr. Christine L. Nelson

*In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree;
In cocoons, a hidden promise; butterflies will soon be free!
In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be,
Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.*

Natalie Sleeth

Every spring I do the same thing. One would think I would give it up as it is a losing battle. I get down on my knees out in the yard and dig up budding dandelions. Like the weeds sprouting up beside the wheat in the parable of Matthew 13, there is no logical reason why they are there. After all I dug them up the year before, roots and all.

“An enemy has done this,” I echo the parable, and launch into full fledged warfare.

So for a few weeks the lawn keeps growing and everything looks fine. The daffodils bloom. The day lilies restart their green growth. The trees blossom with new life. Everything is as I think God intended it to be.

Then suddenly there they are their bright yellow faces among the sea of beautiful green grass. These weeds

breed among the produce of spring. Nobody plants dandelions, yet they appear as regularly as perennials. Yes, we can try and rub them out all summer long with chemicals, but we will kill the grass which surrounds them. As the parable suggests, better to let the weeds and wheat grow together as intertwined as they are, until the harvest. Only then can the reapers safely separate the good seed from the bad.

Our society and, yes because we now live in a global community, the world is trying to sort the good debt from the bad. We're looking for strategies that will right world markets, our companies, and yes, our individual bottom lines. There is a whole lot of weeping and gnashing of teeth, but the powers that be have no better luck than I do with my battle with dandelions.

We must cultivate the soul of our society...

(Continued on page 2)

**VISIT
LEHIGHCHURCHES.ORG**

DONATE NOW THROUGH Network for Good



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Month of April
Cooking for the Conference

April 26
Pioneer Band w/ Rev. Hepburn

May 19
LCCC Annual Meeting Luncheon at America on Wheels

May 30
Scout for Food to Benefit Hunger Programs

SPRING, Cont'd

(Continued from page 1)

What is needed is a different kind of rite. The practice of sowing good seed takes more than scattering it about and expecting first-rate growth the next day.

We must cultivate the soul of our society just like our own souls, so that it will be receptive to the seed, the rain, and the sunlight of God's love and grace. There is no better description about citizenship than centuries ago was given to the congregation of Rome:

Don't run up debts, except for the huge debt of love you owe each other. When you love others, you complete what the law has been after all along. The law code--- don't sleep with another person's spouse, don't take someone's life, don't take what isn't yours, don't always be wanting what you don't have, and any other "don'ts" you can think of---finally adds up to this: Love other people as well as you do yourself. You can't go wrong when you love others. When you add up everything in the law code, the sum total is love (*The Message* Romans 13:8-10).

The point of the parable of the weeds and cultivating the soul of our society is not that we should act as judge and jury of one another. That is God's work which He alone can do and will do in His own time. Rather, we should seek to develop, as *The Message* says, "ripe, holy lives that will mature and adorn the kingdom of their Father."

Forget the dandelions. I'm feeling like going out to plant a few tomato, lettuce, and carrot seeds.



Volunteers Needed to Help Cook and Serve Meals at Daybreak .

**Call Volunteer Coordinator
Christine Durner at 484-664-7320**

WHAT MAKES A GREAT VOLUNTEER?

The Lehigh County Conference of Churches is grateful for the time, talent and treasures offered by our volunteers to help meet the needs of those we serve. What makes our volunteers so great?

- ◇ Our volunteers understand the mission and vision of the LCCC.
- ◇ Our volunteers are professional and passionate about their work.
- ◇ Our volunteers are realistic about the time they have available to volunteer.
- ◇ Our volunteers take their commitments seriously, keeping schedules or calling in advance to make any necessary changes.
- ◇ Our volunteers are caring and sharing.
- ◇ Our volunteers are flexible, willing to try something new and step up to unexpected challenges.
- ◇ Our volunteers take the initiative and communicate concerns.
- ◇ Our volunteers exhibit patience, compassion and enthusiasm.
- ◇ Our volunteers recognize the positive results of LCCC.
- ◇ Our volunteers are a joy to work with!

Join our dedicated corps of 800 volunteers.

Visit www.lehighchurches.org and view volunteer opportunities at the LCCC or call Volunteer Coordinator Christine Durner at 484-664-7320.

2009 Lay Representative Trainings

Trainings for lay representatives of LCCC member churches for 2009 have been scheduled. The trainings will be held from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM:

June 11, September 10 & December 10

These trainings will help lay reps better understand their role and explain the various ministries of the Conference. Lay reps are required to attend one training per year. Sign up by contacting the LCCC main office at 610-433-6421 or Tanean Schaller at tschaller@lehighchurches.org or 484-664-7320.



Conference Bulletin Board



PIONEER BAND FREE SPRING CONCERT APRIL 26 FEATURES REV. DEB HEPBURN OF THE LCCC

The Pioneer Band of Allentown will present its 2009 Spring Concert on April 26 at 3:00 PM at the Scottish Rite Cathedral in Allentown. This year, the band has invited as its guest soloist, Reverend Debra Hepburn, LCCC Ecumenical Director, to join the band as it presents:

“A THEATRICAL SPECTACULAR”

The Pioneer Band is under the direction of Jay A. Durner and is in its 120th year of providing music throughout the Lehigh Valley. In this time of economic change, the members of the band have offered to share not only their music, but also all donations collected at this concert with the Lehigh County Conference of Churches. This free-will offering will be used to aid the hunger programs of the LCCC.

Admission to the concert is free. The Scottish Rite Cathedral is located at 1533 Hamilton St., Allentown. For more information visit the band's website at: www.pioneerband.com.

3rd Thursday Conference Tours

Conference tours are offered the 3rd Thursday of every month. The next tour is scheduled for:

April 16

11:30AM – 12:45 PM

LCCC Main Office, 534 Chew St, Allentown.

Call 610-433-6421 or contact Chris Durner at cdurner@lccconfchurch.org or 484-664-7320 for information or registration.



LCCC ANNUAL MEETING MAY 19, 2009 LUNCHEON

America on Wheels Museum

SAVE THE DATE!

2009 ECUMENICAL SERVICE AWARDS NOMINATIONS SOUGHT

Since 1981, the LCCC Ecumenical Service Awards have recognized outstanding contributions to Christian unity in our community.

Nominations are sought for the 2009 awards in the following categories:

- Youth – age 21 and under
- A group within a church or faith-based organization
- Adult

To make your nomination by April 10th visit www.lehighchurches.org to access a nomination form. Contact Rev. Hepburn at 484-664-7320 or dhepburn@lehighchurches.org for information.

LCCC COMMITTEES NEED VOLUNTEERS INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY or EVENT PLANNING

The LCCC is looking to fill a number of spots on our Support Committees. We can use your help.

- ◇ The Information Technology Support Committee meets at 4:00 PM on the last Monday of the month. This committee focuses on network security, computer upgrades, new technology, web development, purchasing, and implementation of new software.
- ◇ The “Together We Can” Event Committee meets at 6:00 PM on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. This group needs assistance with fundraising, invitations, awards, programs and an online auction for our October fundraising event.

Call Volunteer Coordinator Christine Durner at 484 664-7320 for information about these or other volunteer opportunities.



GIVING ALIMA A HAND UP

By Gigi Pacheco

Last year the Pharmaceutical Assistance program helped 346 adults and 41 children. 575 prescriptions were filled. Given the state of the economy, economy, we expect to see more needy individuals and families come to us for help.

Alima came to the Conference after her husband Jesse called six pharmacies trying to find the best price for the antibiotics and cough medicine needed by their two children. The best price he found was \$64 for each child - far more than they could afford after paying the rent and household expenses. Thankfully, one pharmacist referred them to the Conference for help.

After explaining the program to him, Jesse told me that his wife Alima would be coming in to do the paperwork because he had to leave for his third part-time job. When Alima came in, we were able to give her a voucher to pay for her children's medications.

Alima thanked me for the help and asked if we would be able to help them next time the children got sick. I explained that our program can only help once a year but I did have a solution for her.

I went online and gave Alima program information and an application to the state's Children's Health Insurance Program. This program, available to all children in Pennsylvania, gave Alima the peace of mind that she needed.

LCCC WEB REMINDER

New Conference Web Address
www.lehighchurches.org

The Old Site Still Works, But Not Forever.

Affiliate Web Site
Link Up for Justice & Advocacy
<http://ja.ppj.org>



HELP!

**Pathways Needs Toiletries
and Disposable Diapers**

HELPING THE UNINSURED WITH THEIR PRESCRIPTIONS

Over 42 million American live without health insurance that covers the costs of their prescriptions. The good news is that there is relief in sight. K-Mart, Wal-Mart, Giant, Wegman's and others now sell generic medications for as low as \$4 for a one month's supply. And don't forget that the LCCC can also help with your emergency prescription needs and that we have a special fund to help Lehigh County women who are facing cancer. Call 610-433-6421 for more information.

Lehigh County residents can receive a Prescription Discount Card that provides from 20% to 50% off the pharmacy's regular price on all commonly prescribed medications. Everyone is eligible. There are no income or age requirements. One card covers the entire family. The Lehigh County Prescription Discount Card program also offers mail service, savings on injectible drugs, and information on health topics, drug information and drug interaction. For additional information, call (610) 782-3200 or visit www.lehighcounty.org.

Sponsored by several pharmaceutical manufacturers, PPARX provides medications free or almost free from those companies to qualified individuals. Call toll-free 1-888-477-2669 (1-888-4PPA-NOW) to talk with a specialist who will guide you through the application process. The call center accepts calls in English, Spanish and many other languages. Visit their *user-friendly* web site (www.pparx.org) to find programs for which you may be eligible.



SUPPORT THE LCCC WITH A MATCHING GIFT FROM YOUR COMPANY

Many Lehigh Valley employers match gifts to organizations like the Lehigh County Conference of Churches. When you donate to the LCCC, check with your personnel office to find out if your company is one that does. If not, ask, "Why not?"



SCOOT FOR FOOD

SCOOTER / MOTORCYCLE RIDE

SATURDAY, MAY 30

Benefiting Emergency Food Programs in Allentown and Bath

MEET 10:00 am

AMERICA ON WHEELS MUSEUM

Front & Hamilton Sts., Allentown

Discount on Guided Tour

Ride 12:00 noon

From Allentown to Keystone Park

Route 329 and Green Sts., Bath

Burgers & Dogs

Live Music, Auction & Door Prizes

REGISTRATION

A Bag of Groceries

A Grocery Gift Card

Or \$10.00



COOKING FOR THE CONFERENCE

**easy as pie...
or spaghetti
or scrambled eggs.**

Your congregation, school or community group already holds bake sales, breakfasts, or spaghetti dinners. Hold one more, for the benefit of the LCCC Soup Kitchen or the Daybreak drop-in center. We've heard from several congregations, large and small. We'd like to hear from you.

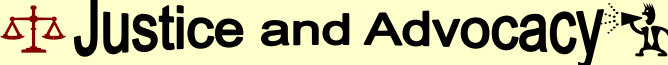


**Join Solomon's UCC, 82 S. Church St.,
Macungie for a Spaghetti Dinner
April 17, 5:00—7:00 PM**

**THE LCCC SERVED
44,000 MEALS IN 2004**

**60,000 MEALS WERE
SERVED IN 2008**

We'll promote your event in our print and email newsletters that reach 1,500 individuals, congregations, and community groups. Call Development Director Ira Faro at 610-433-6421 or email ifaro@lehighchurches.org for information.

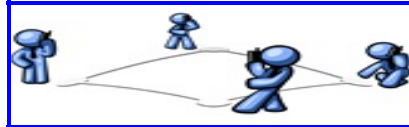


Justice and Advocacy

LCCC JUSTICE & ADVOCACY NETWORK MEET and GREET

Wednesday, May 27, 2009, 6:00 – 7:30 PM

St. Paul's Lutheran Church ,8th & Walnut Sts., Allentown



Close to 40 advocates recently attended the Bread For The World Offering of Letters Workshop to discuss the root causes of international and domestic hunger. They came from local churches, colleges, and community organizations with a desire to help eliminate hunger and poverty. The Justice and Advocacy Committee will be hosting a Meet and Greet to bring people together to work on hunger, homelessness, and other concerns that contribute to the growing poverty in our community and around the country.

Hear how local advocates are uniting to:

- ◇ Eliminate hunger and homelessness in Lehigh County;
- ◇ Achieve better services for persons living with mental illness;
- ◇ Save the lives of at-risk youth and give them hope.;
- ◇ Join the J&A Network and promote just legislation for needy men, women and families.

RSVP by Thursday, May 21, to Tanean Schaller at tschaller@lehighchurches.org or 484-664-7320 or call the Conference main office at 610-433-6421.

Refreshments will be provided

Parking is available at the church and on the street. Everyone is welcome to attend

Tri-City Prayer Walk 2009 April 18, 2009, 1:00-3:00 PM

Praying for God's blessings on the Lehigh Valley cities and towns in which we live work and play. Gatherings will happen simultaneously in:

- ◇ Allentown: Zion's Reformed UCC, 620 Hamilton Street
- ◇ Bethlehem: El Shaddai, 529 E. Broad Street
- ◇ Easton: Legacy Ministries, 120 S. 12th St.

For information call 610-691-1946.
Sponsored by Share the Power and One Voice



**Daybreak and the
Soup Kitchen Need
Donations of Meats, Fresh Fruits
and Veggies.**

**Call Volunteer Coordinator
Christine Durner at 484-664-7320**

Make a Will or Trust!

A will or trust allows you to make your own decisions on who should receive your assets.

Leave a lasting legacy.

Remember the
Lehigh County Conference of Churches.



Community Bulletin Board



GET INVOLVED IN A COMMUNITY-WIDE INTERFAITH COMMUNITY SERVICE DAY!

The Interfaith Coalition for Community Service of Allentown, made up of clergy and lay volunteers with the support of the Volunteer Center of the Lehigh Valley, is an organization dedicated to helping change the landscape of interfaith relations and understanding in the Greater Allentown area. The Coalition held its first community service day in 2008 during which over 400 volunteers from 25 faith-based groups performed acts of service in the community.

The second annual INTERFAITH COMMUNITY SERVICE DAY will be held on SUNDAY, MAY 3, 2009. Anyone in the community, regardless of affiliation or non-affiliation, can participate in the faith-based activities and projects offered by local churches and organizations. By joining this large scale effort to bring together a multi-faith coalition for the benefit of people in need in the greater Allentown area, you can help to make this day a true inter-faith experience. The Lehigh County Conference of Churches fully supports this endeavor and will be offering volunteer opportunities for painting and paper product collection.

Registrations for groups or individuals are accepted. A pot-luck dinner at Congregation Keneseth Israel will conclude the day's activities. To learn more about these and other events or to register for a project, visit www.InterfaithCoalitionofAllentown.org.

WOMEN LOOKING FOR A JOB, PERFECT FIT CAN HELP YOU DRESS FOR SUCCESS

The *Perfect Fit for Working Women* is a project of the Allentown YMCA/YWCA. Its mission is "To empower women of low income entering the workforce." Each client will be provided with appropriate clothing and job assistance. These services will instill confidence and raise self esteem, enhancing a woman's ability to succeed."



If you have women in your parish that fit this description, looking for work and in need of an interview suit or clothing for their new job, please call *Perfect Fit* 610-871-5060. Clients must be referred by their pastor. Appointments must be made in advance. *Perfect Fit* is located at 1101 W. Hamilton St. in Allentown.

Celebration of Life in Music

Saturday, April 18, 2009 at 4:00 PM
Moravian College

Prosser Auditorium. Hauptert Union Building,
Locust & Monocacy Sts., Bethlehem

A concert featuring:
Faith Moravian Church of Washington, DC
Handbell Choir, Pans of Faith (Steel Drum Band),
Chancel Choir, Men's Gospel Choir, and
Children's "All for Christ" Choir
and performances by
Moravian Theological Seminary Choir,
Life Academy "Kingdom Dancers"

Trumpet Solo by Steve Lozada,
Pastor at Calvary Temple, Allentown
Member, LCCC Board of Directors

*Concert free, donations welcome for student
scholarships at Moravian Theological Seminary*

RSVP: Kimberly Holmes at 610-861-1520 or
seminary@moravian.edu

CAREGIVER EXPO

Sunday, May 3, 1:00—4:00 PM, Phoebe Home, 19th & Chew Sts., Allentown

For pastors, parish nurse, caregivers, health & visitation teams from local congregations, and others interested in learning more about community resources for helping older people. Presentations include: Solutions & Support for Alzheimer's Caregivers; Assessment, Home Safety & Community Resources; and more. Attendees will receive complimentary guide to community resources.

RSVP by APRIL 27 to Marian Worthington at 610-794-6889 or caremanager@phoebe.org.

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

April 2009

Non-Profit Organization

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



Ecumenical Encounters

April, 2009

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*The Rev. Dr. Christine L. Nelson,
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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



MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE UNTO THE LORD!

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CELEBRATION OF LIFE IN MUSIC

Saturday, April 18, 2009 at 4:00 PM

Moravian College

Hauptert Union Building, Locust & Monocacy Sts., Bethlehem

Performances by

Moravian Theological Seminary Choir, Life Academy "Kingdom Dancers",
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Trumpet Solo by Steve Lozada,
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Lehigh County Conference of Churches

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