



# Lehigh County Conference of Churches

## Ecumenical Encounters

Volume 23, Number 4

May, 2009

### PEACE...AFTER WOUNDEDNESS

#### Peace, Wounds, and Other God-revealing Signs

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*Jesus came and stood among them (the disciples) and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side.*

*John 20:19-20*

There are things for which my seminary training never prepared me. The first time a hospitalized parishioner whipped open their shirt to show me their surgery scars was one of them.

"See my heart bypass wound, pastor? They cut me from stem to stern."

I'm sure I turned pale that first time and felt a little woozy on my feet. But with time and practice I learned the appropriate response: "Gol...ly! That's a good one!"

"Peace to you," Jesus said as he came to the disciples after his death. And then fronted his wounded hands, pulled aside his shirt, and showed the wounds in his side. Like my initial pastoral response of shock

to the exposed scars of my parishioner, peace is not customarily one's first response to wounds. What message is Jesus trying to give to his followers? What connection is there between Jesus' wounds and peace for us?

I remember when the church was trying to institute the passing of the peace of Christ as an every week worship occurrence. There were a lot of wary looks and hesitations. There were many complaints. We did not want to touch one another. What were we afraid of? I don't believe it was germs. It was relationships. Touching one another meant an invitation to deeper relationship. And we were afraid.

A wounded Jesus offering peace is an invitation to deeper relationship with God. I'll show you my wounds, God

**A wounded Jesus offering peace is an invitation to deeper relationship with God.**

*(Continued on page 2)*

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LEHIGHCHURCHES.ORG**

**DONATE NOW THROUGH Network for Good**



CALENDAR  
OF EVENTS

**May 14**

Faithful Reform  
Health Care  
Workshop

**May 19**

LCCC  
Annual Meeting  
Luncheon at  
America on  
Wheels

**May 30**

Scoot for Food to  
Benefit Hunger  
Programs

## PEACE..., Cont'd

says, and you show me yours. As ugly as they may be, as frightened as you may be, my peace will heal, says God.

The healing God offers us all encompasses body, mind and soul. Shalom, the Hebrew term, indicates wholeness of health, prosperity, security, and spirit. Our scars are of all these varieties. Jimmy at the Soup Kitchen walks with a limp from an accident experienced on his job. His soul is scarred also as he has been denied disability and doesn't know how he will provide for his family. Jane, a Daybreak member, carries with her the stripes from whippings by her family and a community who berates her and scorns her for being "slow."

When, because of our faith, because of our belief everyone is a child of God, you ladle out a warm meal, paint a room bright cheery colors, provide jobs or funding for identification cards, you give peace, the healing of God which truly does surpass all human understanding. For it is peace placed in the heart, a peace which cannot be dislodged with a surgeon's scalpel or lost like a 20 year job.

Jesus meets us with his scars still evident. Let us touch those scars and find healing. Let us share our scars and find peace. Let us pass the peace of Christ to our neighbor each day and every day and be an instrument of Christ's peace.

### 2009 Ecumenical Service Award Winners

The Lehigh County Conference of Churches is pleased to announce the winners of the 2009 Ecumenical Service Awards.

**Mrs. Mildred Scrak** is coordinator of the Catholic Charities Ecumenical Kitchen. Called "Milly" by everyone who knows her, she is a great-grandmother and life-long member of St. Anne's RC Church in Bethlehem. Milly was nominated by Mr. Rich Brenfleck of St. Thomas More RC Church.

Milly began volunteering at the soup kitchen with her husband in 1982. Due to the increased need in the community, the Diocese hired her to provide p/t administrative support to keep the kitchen compliant with operational standards. And every week she volunteers 20 or more hours to make sure hungry people receive something to eat.

**J. S. Burkholder Funeral Home** will receive the 2009 Ecumenical Service award in the group category. Burkholder's was nominated by Mrs. Elizabeth Benke for their service to poor and struggling families at Christmas time.

For over 10 years Burkholder's staff has participated in the Christmas celebration at the LCCC

Soup Kitchen. In addition to serving the Christmas meal, they collect and distribute gifts with the help of an employee who dresses up as Santa.

Mrs. Benke states, "This celebration could never happen with out all the help the Funeral Home employees provide."

The awards will be presented at the upcoming LCCC Annual Meeting on May 19th, 12:00 noon at the America On Wheels Museum, Front Street, Allentown. Please join us in congratulating the winners for working to bring people together in the name of Christ.



**Don't tell anyone, but that's Burkholder's Todd Siegfried in the Santa suit.**

# LCCC ANNUAL MEETING

## *Living the Faith in Difficult Economic Times: Creative Community Ministries with Congregations*



**When: Tuesday, May 19th**

**Where: America On Wheels Museum  
5 North Front Street, Allentown**

*Pastors and Lay Representatives especially encouraged to attend.*

### 11:30 AM

- Registration
- Visit stations to learn from LCCC staff about resources available to help people in need.

### 12:00 PM

- Addressing the question of how congregations can help their members and neighbors who have lost jobs, need utility, housing, food or health-care aid.
- Presentation of the Ecumenical Service Awards for “living” Christian unity.
- Election of officers and Board of Directors
- Years of service awards to staff & Board members
- Passing of the annual budget.

**Registration and Lunch: \$20.00. Please register by May 15th**

**Mail to:**  
**Lehigh County Conference of Churches**  
 534 Chew Street  
 Allentown, PA 18102

**Phone: 610-433-6421**  
**Fax: 610-439-8039**  
**Web: [www.lehighchurches.org](http://www.lehighchurches.org)**  
**Email: [info@lehighchurches.org](mailto:info@lehighchurches.org)**



### LCCC WEB REMINDER

**New Conference Web Address**  
**[www.lehighchurches.org](http://www.lehighchurches.org)**  
 The Old Site Still Works, But Not Forever.

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

### TAX TIP

**If you sell appreciated securities this year, you may lose 15% of your appreciation to taxes. If you contribute those securities to the LCCC, you will receive two benefits:**

- ◇ **Avoid capital gains tax**
- ◇ **Receive a full income tax deduction**

## LCCC ANNUAL MEETING: Continued Nominations for LCCC Board of Directors

### First Term:

**Timothy Bingham**, retired lawyer, volunteer at Soup Kitchen and Pathways, member of Episcopal Church of the Mediator, Allentown

**Henry Moore**, Project Manager, COPS in Schools Training Program Pennsylvania Regional Community Policing Institute, LCCC Aspires Mentoring volunteer, member of St. James AME Zion, Allentown

**Renee Saleh**, retired former Director of Financial Aid at both Kutztown University and Northampton Community College, CROP Walk Coordinator, member of First Presbyterian, Allentown

(Both Henry and Renee have been fulfilling unfulfilled terms)

### Second Term:

**Bishop Blair Couch**, pastor of Calvary Moravian Church, Allentown; LCCC Personal Committee and Executive Committee

**Richard Focht**, attorney with Schoffstall & Focht, P.C., LCCC Vice President and Chair of Long Range; member of St. Timothy's Lutheran Church, Allentown

**Sonya Siegfried**, General Manager of Burkholder Funeral Home, LCCC Soup Kitchen Committee; member of First Presbyterian Church, Allentown

### Officers:

**President – Mr. Rick Focht**

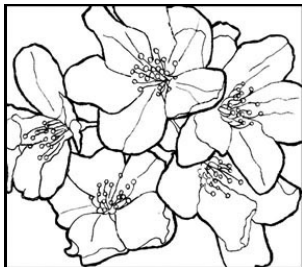
**VP - Ms. Eunice Schermerhorn**

**Secretary – Mr. Ken Mohr**

**Treasurer - Ms. Theresa Racek**

## CREATIVITY BLOOMS FOR LCCC

Spring has taken root in the Lehigh Valley and as we have become rejuvenated by sunny skies, birds singing and flowers blooming, creativity has also blossomed within one of our member churches. St. John's UCC in Emmaus has found a unique way to encourage its members to support the Lehigh County Conference of Churches. Through the efforts of their mission committee they organized a "Cooking for the Conference" event. The group distributed cookies to all those who attended services on Palm and Easter Sundays. Along with the cookies, they included a donation envelope and the following poem written by Linda Roosa:



Think of a child on a warm, sunny day,  
Wishing to run, hop, skip and play.  
Her tummy growls for want of food,  
Which doesn't help for a happy mood.  
But money is tight and the future not bright,  
And there isn't much food from morning till night.  
Cereal is scant and snack food won't do,  
She relies on LCCC to pull her through.



The congregation at St. John's is an example of how imagination and generosity can help us minister to those most in need. Their efforts exemplify how blessed we are by the member churches, community organizations and individuals that support LCCC.



## Conference Bulletin Board



### DAYBREAK VOLUNTEER KATIE BEMIS: SOMEONE SPECIAL

By Kevin Beck, Daybreak Kitchen Coordinator

On April 3rd, Daybreak was notified that thanks to our nomination, Katie Bemis had been recognized by the Volunteer Center of the Lehigh Valley and WAEB as Someone Special.

Daybreak is a drop-in center for men and women with mental illness, HIV/AIDS, chemical dependencies, or the impoverished elderly. Daybreak hosts many volunteers, but Katie Bemis is a cut above them all.

Over the past four years, Katie has shown amazing dedication to our clients and our program. An Education major at Muhlenberg College, Katie coordinates weekly student outings to our facility and recruits new volunteers on campus. Katie and her fellow students enhance our program greatly by helping us prepare and serve meals and by giving our clients much needed social interaction and companionship.

Katie is well liked and appreciated by everyone at Daybreak. We have not seen a volunteer who is more caring and giving of not only her time but also her friendship. She is greeted each week with warm smiles and hugs from our clients and is always unconditionally accepting of them, someone that they feel like they can talk to.

Katie recently received a scholarship award for community service which she generously donated to Daybreak. She has consistently gone above and beyond what is expected of our volunteers. Not only does she talk the talk and walk the walk, but Katie lives the life of the ultimate volunteer. This is why we at Daybreak consider her to be our "Someone Special".

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday Conference Tours

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

**May 21**

11:30AM – 12:45 PM

LCCC Main Office, 534 Chew St, Allentown.

Call 610-433-6421 or contact Rev. Hepburn at [dhepburn@lehighchurches.org](mailto:dhepburn@lehighchurches.org) or 484-664-7320 for information or registration.

### 2009 Lay Representative Trainings

Trainings for lay representatives of LCCC member churches for 2009 have been scheduled. The next training will be held in two sessions:

**Thursday, June 11**

**10:00 AM to 12:00 noon**

**Or**

**6:00 PM to 7:30 PM**

These training 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.

Register by contacting the LCCC main office at 610-433-6421 or Rev. Hepburn at 484-664-7320.

HELP!



#### Daybreak Needs:

- ◇ Coffee
- ◇ Cereal
- ◇ Juice
- ◇ Paper products
- ◇ Bingo prizes
- ◇ Groups to cook and serve a meal

**Call 610-433-6421  
To Volunteer Your  
Time,  
Talent,  
and Treasure**

#### Pathways Needs:

- ◇ Soap
- ◇ Shampoo
- ◇ Toothpaste
- ◇ Toothbrushes
- ◇ Razors
- ◇ Diapers – sizes 4 & 5



# Justice and Advocacy




## Faithful Reform Health Care Workshop

Thursday, May 14th, 7:00 – 9:00 PM

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 8th and Walnut Streets, Allentown



Do you live in the 15th Congressional District? Are concerned about the state of healthcare for your family and friends? If so, attend a community meeting to learn the real issues and work towards a solution. The Faithful Reform workshop is presented by a collaboration of organizations including the LCCC who are focused on advocacy for the poor. Presentations will include:

- ◇ “How Did it Get This Bad?” by Sharon Ward, PA Budget and Policy Center
- ◇ “Sharing Your Health Care Journey” with Marissa Harris of LAMPA
- ◇ “What Can We Do Now?” with LCCC J&A Committee and other event sponsors

If you would like to see all people have access to care, please register your attendance with Gigi Pacheco at [gpacheco@lehighchurches.org](mailto:gpacheco@lehighchurches.org) or by calling 610-433-6421. Refreshments will be provided. All are welcome.

### LCCC JUSTICE & ADVOCACY NETWORK MEET and GREET

Wednesday, May 27, 2009, 6:00 – 7:30 PM  
St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 8<sup>th</sup> & Walnut Sts., Allentown



Many people are talking about the effects of the economy on the poor and middle class. Some are wondering if the Washington and Harrisburg bigwigs really understand what people are going through in order to make ends meet.

The J&A Committee of the Conference is calling on people in local congregations and organizations to come together and form an advocacy network to address the root causes of poverty and homelessness. If you believe you can help make a difference please come and let others know your work and your interests. You will:

- ◇ Meet people who share your passion for justice and commitment to creating a healthy community.
- ◇ Be greeted by J&A Committee members who will connect you with a group who are working on advocacy initiatives like healthcare reform, homelessness prevention, and immigration reform.

To confirm your attendance contact Gigi Pacheco at [gpacheco@lehighchurches.org](mailto:gpacheco@lehighchurches.org) or call 610-433-6421. Light refreshments will be provided. Everyone is welcome to attend and bring a friend.

#### SUMMER IS ON THE WAY!

Daybreak needs an  
air conditioner -  
at least 10,000 BTUs -  
to cool down their  
HOT HOT kitchen.



#### SPINET ORGAN FREE TO GOOD HOME

The executors of an estate are offering a spinet organ in good condition to a local church, school or community group. For information or to arrange pick up call 610-435-3847 or 610-395-4302 .





## Community Bulletin Board



### What Do You Say About Health Care?

Lehigh County Conference of Churches and agencies like CUNA (Congregations United For Neighborhood Action) are joining forces and actively working to help our community's uninsured and underinsured citizens. Healthcare reform is extremely important to many people yet some find it hard to talk about it. LCCC J&A Committee offer these healthcare talking points as points of conversation:

- \* The LCCC Pharmaceutical Assistance Program provided 387 prescription vouchers to residents of Lehigh County lacking health insurance. 125 were employed without medical benefits and 41 were children.
- \* Daybreak provided 510 health services to approximately 315 people living with HIV/AIDS, mental illness, and the indigent elderly.
- \* 9.8 % of Pennsylvania citizens do not have health insurance. 10% of Lehigh County residents and up to 19% of Northampton County residents lack health insurance or are underinsured.

These statistics show that many in Allentown bear the burdens of living without sufficient insurance coverage and accessibility to adequate medical treatment. When you join the J&A Network or attend a J&A sponsored event you help bear the burdens of those struggling to live healthy and make ends meet. If

### **Allentown Mayor's Office on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships Call to Meeting: Thursday, May 14, 2009, 6:00 - 8:00 PM Union Baptist Church - 302 N. 6th St. corner (of 6<sup>th</sup> and Chew Street)**

Program includes address by Mayor Ed Pawlowski; forums on Youth Issues, Recidivism, and Housing; breakout sessions; and closing remarks by Albert Tizon, co-author of *Linking Arms, Linking Lives*.

For information call Ismael Arcelay, Allentown Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, at 610-437-7743.

### **DISCERNING JESUS/ISA IN CHRISTIAN & MUSLIM UNDERSTANDINGS AN INTER-RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION**

**Saturday, May 30, 2009, 9:00 AM – Noon, Moravian Theological Seminary  
60 West Locust Street, Bethlehem**

This program is part of the Moravian Dialogue Center's and Seminary's efforts to develop mutual understanding and cooperation between Islam and Christianity. Registration suggested. Contact Dr. Stephen Simmons, Director of Continuing Education, Moravian Theological Seminary, at 610-861-7868.

### **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

**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

**EMAIL:** ifaro@lehighchurches.org to Register or Just Show Up!



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

May 2009

Non-Profit Organization

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Allentown, PA

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**Ecumenical Encounters**

*May, 2009*

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Conference of Churches

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*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



**MAY EVENTS**

**FAITHFUL REFORM HEALTH CARE WORKSHOP**

Thursday, May 14th, 7:00 – 9:00 PM

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

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**LCCC ANNUAL MEETING**

Tuesday, May 19th, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM

America On Wheels Museum, Front St., Allentown

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**JUSTICE & ADVOCACY NETWORK MEET & GREET**

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

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 8<sup>th</sup> & Walnut Sts., Allentown

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**SCOOT FOR FOOD**

**SCOOTER / MOTORCYCLE RIDE**

**SATURDAY, MAY 30, 10:00 AM Meet-up**  
America On Wheels to Keystone Park, Bath

Lehigh County Conference of Churches

Email: [info@lehighchurches.org](mailto:info@lehighchurches.org)

Telephone: 610-433-6421

Fax: 610-439-8039

[www.lehighchurches.org](http://www.lehighchurches.org)