



Lehigh County Conference of Churches

Ecumenical Encounters

Volume 23, Number 8

October 2009

WE CELEBRATE THE REV. DR. CHRISTINE NELSON'S TEN YEARS OF MINISTRY WITH THE LCCC

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In the summer of 1999, leaders of Lehigh County Conference of Churches met to call a new Executive Director. It was not going to be easy to fill the shoes of their recently retired executive of 12 years, The Rev. Bill Seaman. Conferences of Churches all around them were struggling. Many were folding. How was our Conference to keep growing to meet the ever-increasing number of people in need?

With hope and prayer, that search committee called The Rev. Dr. Chris Nelson, a local church pastor who was mission minded. Shoulder to shoulder the LCCC Board, staff, support committees and volunteers literally prayed and worked their way through all types of crises – financial, staffing, new programs, etc., etc. – to become the stable, community-wide, influential organization the Conference of Churches is today. Many people attribute the impetus of that growth to the steady leadership of Chris.

With so many pressing needs, the community pulled the Conference in too many directions. Working together, the Board and staff created a Mission Statement and Vi-

sion Statement which focused their energies in five areas: hunger, homelessness, mental health, youth-at-risk, and Christian unity. The Vision also carves an image in people's minds: "...striving to be the face, feet, hands and heart of God's grace in the Lehigh Valley."

There was so much need and so little money. Again, working with volunteers deeply committed to God and the Conference, under Dr. Nelson's leadership a million dollar capital campaign to fund future missions proved that "Together We Will" make an even larger difference in the community.



As the volume of people coming through the doors of the Conference kept growing from 3,000 to 6,000 to the current 14,000, Rev. Nelson creatively built on programs of the past and found new community resources to address emerging needs. Food, shelter, clothing, rental assistance, and life skills were offered at our bread-and-butter Daybreak, Soup Kitchen, Pathways and Representative Payee programs. But what about the people living on the street? Couldn't we do more than offer a blanket, food, and occasional other helps? Couldn't we truly walk with them daily to

**VISIT
LEHIGH-
CHURCHES.ORG**


**CALENDAR OF
EVENTS**

October 11

CROP Hunger Walk, 1:00 pm, St. Timothy's Lutheran Church

October 14

Together We Can, Annual Fund-raiser, 5:30 pm Asbury United Methodist Church

December 12

Christmas Peace Pilgrimage, 11:00 am, 520 East Broad Street, Bethlehem

DONATE NOW THROUGH Network for Good

Continued from page 1

other services that would turn their lives around? Intensive case management of the chronically homeless led to permanent housing opportunities for them and eventually to the last critical need in our continuum of care – jobs – via the creation of a job training program where folks could relearn skills and find real jobs.

Along the way a local church asked for help with kids that were in danger of dropping out of school. There were just too many of them for one church to manage in its mentoring program. Wasn't the LCCC the logical organization to muster all the resources of churches in the region? Rev. Nelson mid-wifed Aspires Mentoring into the leading mentoring program in the Valley that now helps others develop mentoring opportunities.

The voice of the faith community in the Valley has become stronger as the LCCC under Dr. Nelson's leadership has brought so many different segments to work together. A driving force on the Allentown 10 Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness brings city, county, social service, and faith community resources together in a tighter safety net. Working with other advocacy organizations such as the Community Action Committee of the LV, the Children's Coalition, the United Way of the Greater LV and the LCCC's own Justice and Advocacy Committee, the concerns of people in need are more clearly heard because Chris gives them voice. Walls between people of different denominations and faiths have been breached in good ways because Chris wouldn't give up and keeps on trying to bring people together in the name of God.

ACHIEVE (Action Communities for Health, Innovation and Environmental Change), the Mayor's faith-based initiative, Women's Leadership Initiative of the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley, various interfaith groups and Muhlenberg College Associates are just a few of the many community involvements that benefit from the resourcefulness of Dr. Nelson.

We thank you, Rev. Nelson, for walking with us through these past ten years. May God continue to bless our ministry together here in the Lehigh Valley.



Welcome

**The Reverend William J. Kuntze
Ecumenical Director
Lehigh County Conference of Churches**

We are pleased to announce that The Reverend William J. Kuntze has been called to the position of Ecumenical Director and provider of Information Technology support for the Lehigh County Conference of Churches.

An Ordained Elder of the United Methodist Church, for the past ten years Reverend Bill Kuntze was the Executive Director of New Bethany Ministries in Bethlehem. Previously he has served as the Executive Director of the Urban Mission in Steubenville, Ohio, and as the pastor of both small inner-city congregations and large suburban churches in the Chicago area. Pastor Bill was the director of a campus ministry at The University of Chicago and taught part-time at both The Chicago Theological Seminary and Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary.

In his professional service, Reverend Bill has provided administrative leadership and prophetic social-justice ministry through a number of regional and national Church agencies. He is a practitioner of Christian nonviolence and has participated in several international peace missions. Throughout his career he has been committed to mission service of the poor and has participated in volunteer work teams in many places in the United States and in several other countries.

Reverend Bill is also the host of a weekly television show, *Taking the Initiative*, which is broadcast at 8:30 pm on Tuesdays and Fridays on WBPH, TV60, carried on most cable services.

Bill loves mountain hiking. He is married to The Rev. Janice I. Butz, an Ordained Deacon of the United Methodist Church, who is the Minister of Music at Saint John's Lutheran Church in Nazareth. The family home is in Bethlehem Township.

aspires TOGETHER WE CAN aspire

Wednesday, October 14, 5:30 PM
Asbury United Methodist Church

AT-RISK YOUTH FOCUS

CALL NOW TO RESERVE YOUR SEAT

ASPIRES MENTOR OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Magda Abou-Saif—Aspires Year Round
George Schermerhorn—Partners In Progress
Colleen Haycock—Very Important Parents

FEATURED SPEAKER

John Antinoro, Senior Investigator
Gang Intelligence Section of the New Jersey Department of Corrections



- **Come for the fine food provided by our friends at CURA Hospitality.**
- **Come for the fun and fellowship facilitated by emcee Ken Matthews.**
- **Come to hear stories that will lift up your spirits.**

Together We Can make a difference in the lives of at-risk youth in Lehigh County.

For information or to register contact
Development Director Ira Faro at 610-433-6421
ifaro@lehighchurches.org.



HOSPITALITY AS SACRED DUTY OF THE FAITHFUL LEHIGH DIALOGUE CENTER IFTAR

The Lehigh Dialogue Center held its annual Iftar Dinner September 10. Not only was the special dinner a celebration of Muslims breaking the fast, but it was an opportunity to do so with local leaders of the community and friends in this traditional celebration. President Fahrudin Mekic welcomed everyone saying, "This evening is not only about the breaking of the fast, but the unity that we all come together under the one God. Even though we have our differences, we all agree that we come as loyal servants of God."

The Holy month of Ramadan is considered the most venerated, blessed and spiritually-beneficial month of the Islamic year. Academicians and other prominent guests took part in the fast-breaking dinner following the call to prayer or what many call as "the Adhan."

After the dinner, the speakers took the stage and delivered their messages on the significance of hospitality and sharing. Rabbi Jonathan Gerard, Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Covenant of Peace stated "when we welcome strangers we open up the opportunity for the divine."

The Rev. Dr. Christine Nelson, the Executive Director of the Lehigh County Conference of Churches, challenged "there is no better time than now to reach out to a stranger, to offer protection and/or sustenance. Even, and especially, if the other is a perceived enemy of one's particular cultural group." And Fatih Harpci, Turkish columnist for Zamar, shared that "hospitality is to serve the guest with cheerfulness like Abraham...with an attitude and action of patience, fortitude, and courtesy. " True hospitality was experienced all evening!

Follow the link for more information and scenes from the Iftar: <http://newsebru.tv/en/usa/13120.html>

DAY OF CARING

On September 24th, the Volunteer Center of the Lehigh Valley hosted an annual Day of Caring. Volunteers from businesses and organizations all over the region completed projects large and small, helping to ensure that as many resources as possible go directly to funding client services.

This year the Morning Call generously sent six employees to the Lehigh County Conference of Churches, where they spent the day cleaning and painting the offices used by the Pathways program. A special thank you goes out to the "painting crew" for helping us to help others. We depend on our community partners to support our commitment to putting our faith into action.

Do you have a talent or skill you would like to share? Lehigh County Conference of Churches is always looking for volunteers to assist in our ministries. Please call Abby Goldfarb, Volunteer Coordinator to discuss the possibilities (484) 664-7320, x16.

Volunteer Spotlight CAROL MILLER SOUP KITCHEN

VOLUNTEER EXTRAORDINAIRE

How do you thank someone who has cooked for you for 15 years, rounded up countless volunteers, and touched the lives of thousands of hungry people? You give them a cake, your unending thanks, and a Soup Kitchen apron! On September 24 Charles, Elizabeth, Rev. Nelson, and the whole soup kitchen crew from Calvary Baptist Church, Allentown, surprised Carol Miller with a party to celebrate her 15 years of dedicated service at the LCCC Soup Kitchen.

The Calvary Crew has been serving nearly since the Soup Kitchen's inception 27 years ago. Carol took the leadership reins and faithfully gathered congregational members to plan the cuisine, seek food donations, cook and serve the meals. Boy do you look good in that apron, Carol! We cannot thank Carol enough and the hundreds of volunteers who rain or shine see that food and love are served to hungry people at our Soup Kitchen. We salute you and your faithfulness to God and neighbor!

50th Annual Nazareth to Bethlehem
Christmas Peace Pilgrimage
 Saturday, December 12, 2009

Walk the Road of Peace. For 50 years during the Christmas season, people who believe in the importance of peace have been gathering in Nazareth to walk the ten miles to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. This pilgrimage, symbolic of the journey of Mary and Joseph, provides all of us, those who walk, those who pass us on the highway and even those who just read about the walk in the Sunday paper, with an opportunity to think about what Christmas really means. Spend this one afternoon taking a stand for what really matters. Come, walk with your family and friends, and make new friends who seek a more peaceful world. If you are concerned about your ability to complete the ten-mile walk you should know that there are both frequent rest stops and relief transportation. **More than a Walk** Even if you cannot walk a portion of the pilgrimage, please consider participating in our related events. In addition to the walk, there is a traditional hymn singing of Christmas carols at the Central Moravian Church steps. Following the singing, we will walk to the Christ United Church of Christ at Market and Center Streets for a simple supper and to hear our guest speaker. This year our speaker is the **Rev. Dr. James A. Forbes, Jr.**, President and Founder of the Healing of the Nations Foundation of New York and Senior Minister Emeritus of the Riverside Church. His presentation is entitled "**Get on the Path and Stay on the Path.**" **Registration:** To help us arrange sufficient food and bus transportation, please register at www.peacewalk.org/Registration and include the names of all people coming with you. You are welcome to come even if you have not pre-registered. You may join at any point along the way; but keep in mind that the times listed are approximate. Dress appropriately for the weather; we walk in sun, wind, rain or snow. Persons desiring overnight lodging or for more information, call Fran Dreisbach at 610-258-7313, or the Lehigh County Conference of Churches, 534 Chew Street, Allentown, PA 18102, 610-433- 6421, or visit our website: www.peacewalk.org.

Schedule: Participants will meet in the parking lot at 520 E. Broad Street, Bethlehem (corner of Broad & Elm) before 11:00 AM. Buses will transport pilgrims to Nazareth Moravian Church on Center Square.

A 10:45 am Buses begin leaving from Bechtel Building parking lot, (520 E. Broad Street, Bethlehem) to Nazareth

B 12:00 Pilgrimage begins at Moravian Church, Nazareth

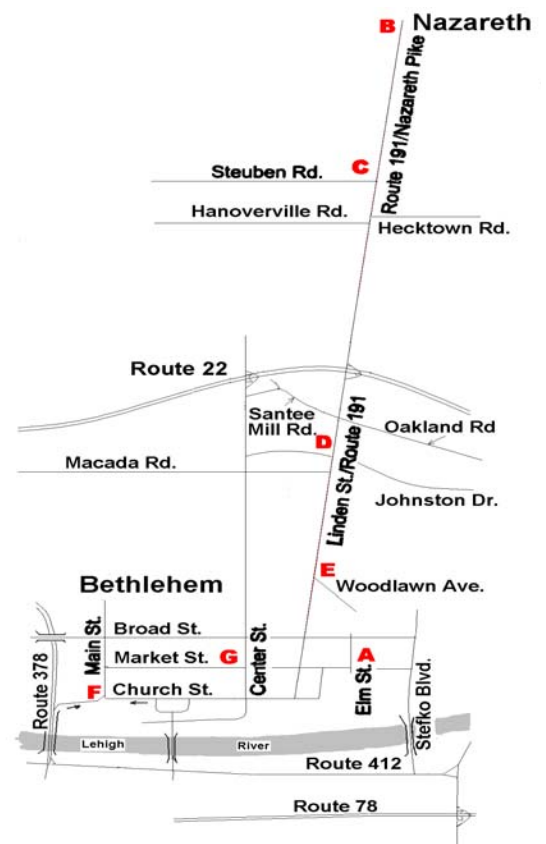
C 1:15 pm Rest stop, Trinity Lutheran Church on Rt. #191 just north of Steuben Road

D 2:30 Rest stop, First Baptist Church on Rt. #191 between Oakland Road and Johnson Dr.

E 3:30 Light candles, First Church of the Nazarene, 1500 Linden Street, Bethlehem

F 4:30 Sing Christmas carols at the Central Moravian Church steps, Main and Church Streets

G 5:30 Supper and Rally, Christ United Church of Christ, Market and Center Streets



(Map is not to scale)

**LCCC PREPARE FOR MOVING DAY
Pathways, Linkage, and HSS Exchange Offices**



PROGRAM NEEDS

Believe it or not, Christmas is just around the corner. Along with our everyday needs, some of our programs have some additional needs. Your help, big or small, is greatly appreciated.

PATHWAYS— Brand New Toys for all ages, soap, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes, razors, diapers size 4 & 5

DAYBREAK—Storage Shelves, coffee, cereal, juice, paper products, bingo prizes, groups to cook and serve a meal

PERMANENT EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (PEP) - USB flash drives (small 256k are fine), Calendar/Planner, working wrist watches

Golfers know that Moving Day is Saturday as the pros get into position for the final day of competition. But Moving Day has taken on a whole new meaning at the Conference.

Starting on October 22 and for at least the next couple of work days, our Pathways housing and referral service will be moving to our satellite site at 544 Hamilton Street. Linkage and Homeless Supportive Services will come over to 534 Chew Street and occupy the space that Pathways is vacating.

While this move means the end of the long-standing sharing of a reception area with the Ecumenical Food Bank, the number of men, women, and families that come to our door to take advantage of our services has increased to the point that overcrowding has become an important issue. Something had to be done.

Other efficiencies and economies will be realized but the important thing is that we will still be doing the good work that we've always been doing. Bear with us as we strive to make the disruption in services as minimal as possible. For instance, even though their location will have moved, the phone numbers for all programs will remain the same.

If you have any questions, call us at 610-433-6421.

CALLING ALL YOUTH TO UNITE...AND SING!

We are seeking youth in grades 6-12 who love to sing and enjoy meeting other Christian youth from across the Valley. Please share the information below with youth, youth leaders, choir directors and pastors.



Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Service
3:00 PM, January 31, 2010, St. John's UCC, Emmaus
Individual youth, choirs and instrumentalist participation wanted

In the near future copies of the songs will be available for pick up at the Conference Office. For more information contact Rick Focht: 610-439-0182 or Rev. Bill Kuntze 610-433-6421. Rehearsal times will be announced.

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY SERVICE, JANUARY 31, 2010

Contact Name:	Phone Number:	
Church/School:	E-mail:	
Address:		
Number of youth to participate:	Grades 6-8:	Grades 9-12:
Contact info if different from above:		

Return this sheet to LCCC, 534 Chew St., Allentown PA 18102 by January 6 or to bkuntze@lehighchurches.org



Community Bulletin Board



TEACH-IN AND DISCUSSION ON TROY DAVIS AND THE DEATH PENALTY

Sponsored by Amnesty International Bethlehem
Group 347, LEPOCO's Lehigh Valley Committee
Against State Killing, and the NAACP Easton
Branch

Thursday, October 15th, 7pm to 9pm

Trinity Episcopal Church, 234 Spring Garden St.,
Easton
Info: Maria Weick (610) 346-8793 or
David Rose (610) 905-8539

WHAT DO I WANT THE OTHER TO TEACH ABOUT MY RELIGION?

DAY OF DIALOGUE
SUNDAY
OCTOBER 18, 2009
2:30—5:30 PM

Muslim Association of the LV
1988 Schadt Ave, Whitehall, PA 18052

Living in Our Particular Wilderness: Being Healthy Leaders for Healthy Churches

A continuing education event for parish clergy and
other church workers

PENNSYLVANIA STATE PASTORS' CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 9-11, 2009

FOUR POINTS SHERATON
HARRISBURG

To register visit, www.pachurches.org or
call 717-545-4761

Hackman's Bible Book Store invite you to a

PASTORS' BREAKFAST

Thursday, October 15, 2009
8:30 am

Guest Speakers: Lenny Luchetti, Lead Pastor,
Stroudsburg Wesleyan Church "Encouraging Pas-
tors through Low Times"

Institute for Jewish-Christian Understanding
Invites you to

FIRST FRIDAY Luncheon Discussion

November 6, 2009
Lunch—11:45 am
Program—12:— - 1:00 pm

Location: Moyer Hall, Miller Forum,
Muhlenberg College

THE GLOBAL WATER CRISIS
Lafayette College Chapter of Engineers With-
out Borders



THANKSGIVING

DINNERS

St. James AME Zion
Saturday, November 21, 2009
12:00 —3:00 pm
410 West Union Street, Allentown, PA

St. Paul's Lutheran
Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 26, 2009
Noon
8th & Walnut Streets, Allentown, PA

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

October 2009

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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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. William Kuntze,
Ecumenical Director*

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

OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER EVENTS

CROP HUNGER WALK

October 11

12:45 PM—Registration

1:00PM St. Timothy's Lutheran Church, 140 S Ott St, Allentown

TOGETHER WE CAN

October 14

5:30 PM

Asbury United Methodist Church
1533 Springhouse Rd, Allentown PA

PENNSYLVANIA STATE PASTORS' CONFERENCE

November 9-11, 2009

Four Points Sheraton Hotel,
Harrisburg, PA

United Way of the
Greater Lehigh Valley



Lehigh County Conference of Churches

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