



# Lehigh County Conference of Churches

## Ecumenical Encounters

Volume 23, Number 10

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

December 2009

### LEFT OUT IN THE COLD NO MORE

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*And she gave birth to her firstborn child and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. Luke 1:7*

They say out of the mouth of babes come wisdom. Carly Muller, a freshman at Emmaus High School, shared in a recent Morning Call editorial her experience of how sitting out 40 minutes in the cold changed her perspective. Sitting all alone waiting for her parents to come pick her up after basketball practice, her cell phone dead and having forgotten her sweatpants with the minutes ticking by, Carly felt abandoned. But then it dawned on her: people actually sleep entire nights in the cold on benches.

*Those people don't have sweat-pants at home, or even a home at all, or a cell phone, or, more often than not, the loving family that I do. And those same people experience that same feeling of isolation I felt for only just an hour all their lives. Although I dealt with a temporary inconvenience, I knew it to be exactly that: temporary. Never could I fathom being in such a situation permanently.*

A person doesn't wake up one morning and from the warmth of their bed decide they want to go live in a nearby park. Traumas --- like loss of a job, a family member, one's health or self-identity --- are what cut away at one's heart over a series of years is what culminates into having the great outdoors as your only home.

The Rileys were a young couple who with their 6 kids were evicted after their jobs dried up. Around Christmas, Mrs. Riley secured a job and the Conference was able to help with a security deposit. They were also placed on a gift list. When the parents were asked what they wanted, they simply said "an alarm clock." Well, this grabbed

the heartstrings of donors. When they dropped off the gifts they saw the place was almost barren of furniture with only folding lawn chairs for seats so they rallied to help them out. The hope reflected in the faces of both families was priceless.

#### How can you help?

- Directly by forming a team of several people from your congregation or business who are willing to walk with people into a new life. We will match you up, tutor you in how to be a helpful guide, and provide ongoing support to the individual or family and your team.
- Indirectly by providing food, blankets, paper products, toiletries, bus passes, dollars for IDs or work boots, flash drives, phone minute cards, or financial donations to support the Conference's ministry with people in need.

Together we must also address the root causes that bring about poverty, joblessness, ill health and unbelief by working to change systems and people's hearts.

Over 2000 years ago another child came into the world and the world has never been the same. Ordinary people like a mother and father, an innkeeper and shepherds reached out to help as God came into the world in a new way. We may never know how our small actions may change lives, but change them they will. In the words of Carly Muller: "By each giving a little, we can change a lot and make certain that no one gets left out in the cold this holiday season."

*The Rev. Dr. Christine L. Nelson*

# 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.

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

*This message sponsored by*

**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](http://www.burkholderfuneral.com)



**Rev. Dr. James Forbes, Jr.  
 Featured Speaker at Peace Pilgrimage**

The 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Nazareth to Bethlehem Christmas Peace Pilgrimage, sponsored by the Lehigh County Conference of Churches, will start with the departure of buses from 520 E. Broad Street in Bethlehem at 10:45, Saturday, December 12, and end, after about a 10 mile walk, at Christ United Church of Christ, Market & Center Streets in Bethlehem, with a supper, music and a speech titled, "Get on the Path and Stay on the Path," by Rev. Forbes. You can still register for the entire event; or you can join the pilgrimage along the way; or you can simply attend the final event with Rev. Forbes, which starts by 6:30. Registration makes the planning of buses and food possible.

Forbes is the first African-American to have served as Senior Minister at Riverside Church in New York City, a church often regarded as the most prominent Protestant pulpit in our country. He has recently retired from Riverside to become the President and Founder of the Healing of the Nations Foundation in New York. He is known world-wide for his inspiring sermons and his prophetic advocacy for social justice and peace. Rev. Forbes is the author of several books; for many years he hosted a radio program, and he was named by *Newsweek Magazine* as one of the twelve "most effective preachers" in the English-speaking world.

Of course, the inspiration will be especially well received by walkers who will have spent the day in peaceful walking, meditation, conversation and song. The on-foot part of the pilgrimage starts at 12:00 noon at the Moravian Church in Nazareth with stops at four churches along the way for rest, refreshments and appropriate activities. It is all symbolic of the journey of Mary and Joseph, and a witness about the real values of the Christmas season, that include peace, community, and joy.

So you are invited to walk with family, friends and neighbors to both seek, and help create a more peaceful world and community.

Much more information is available at [www.peacewalk.org](http://www.peacewalk.org). There you can find out about the route, transportation, personal preparation, and more. Come walk with us! Or, come join us for the celebration with Rev. Forbes at Christ Church that evening.



**Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Service Features Nationally Prominent Hispanic Preacher**

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will be celebrated by the Lehigh County Conference of Churches with a service at 3:00 on Sunday, January 31, at St. John’s UCC, 139 N. 4th St., Emmaus. At that time we will gather around the theme, “You Are Witnesses of These Things,” to pray, to listen, to sing, and to share. Join us to give expression to the unity we all share in Christ.

The speaker this year will be Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, the President of The National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference. Acclaimed as one of America’s most influential Hispanic leaders, Rev. Rodriguez has been the featured speaker at many events and occasions, including at the White House, Promise Keepers and Yale University. He has appeared on national television many times. Rev. Rodriguez is a prominent leader of the new Evangelical Leadership group in our nation, and he is an outspoken advocate of comprehensive immigration reform. He serves on the boards of several prominent institutions, as well as several Evangelical international human service groups. In addition, he has strong roots in this region because he has earned a Master’s degree, and is currently working on a Doctoral degree at Lehigh University.

As we look forward to welcoming Rev. Rodriguez, we are also eager to see how his four themes will impact Christian Unity in this region. He promises to stimulate thought and action on the following points:

- How will Hispanic Christianity transform American Christianity?
- What is the Vertical and Horizontal Hispanic Platform?
- How will Hispanics work across denominational and theological divides for the collective good of the Christian Message?

How can non Latino communities reach out and establish viable and sustainable partnership with the Hispanic community? Of course, Rev. Rodriguez’s presentation will be part of a grand celebration of Christian Unity that will include an ecumenical youth choir, the music of the Christian group, SWIM, music by Grupo Tehillah (Song From Your Heart), hymns and prayers. We hope that it will also include you and the members of your church.

The Ecumenical Youth Choir will have several occasions to sing together and to build relationships with other young Christians:

- There will be three Sunday rehearsals at St. John’s UCC in Emmaus: Jan. 17, 3-4:30; Jan. 24, 6-7:30, and Jan. 31, 2-2:45. Music and lyrics for the selections will be provided to youth in advance, so any who are unable to make either, or both separate rehearsals can still practice and participate.
- Perform at FAITH! A “Clash” of the Valley Choirs at 7:30 pm on Sat. Jan. 30 at the Allentown Symphony Hall. This will be a great opportunity for all youth who like to sing with other Christians.

Once each year the Lehigh County Conference of Churches calls the Christian churches of the region together to celebrate and make visible the unity that transcends the divisions of tradition and denomination that characterize much of our ordinary religious practice. This year, with the leadership of Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, promises to be especially inspiring. Put it on your calendar.

**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 are listed above.

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

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Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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Church/School: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

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Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Number of youth to participate: \_\_\_\_\_ Grades 6-8: \_\_\_\_\_ Grades 9-12: \_\_\_\_\_

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Contact info if different from above: \_\_\_\_\_

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

# Program Christmas Wishlist

## Administration/Operations

- Floors waxed and buffed – foyer, reception, hallway
- Carpets shampooed
- New waiting room chairs
- Paint entry way (elevator area)
- Clean/power outside of building, around main entry doors

## Permanent Employment

- Large trashcans – 50 gallon
- Mop bucket with wringer
- Flash drives
- Rosetta stone or other Spanish language / learning guide
- Christmas –
  - Wrist watches
  - Planners / pocket calendars

## Daybreak

- Deep cleaning of kitchen once per month (Fridays preferred)
- Touch up painting in kitchen area
- Paint all doorways / edging
- Floors waxed/buffed
- Coverage for all evening meals
- Assistance for holiday parties
- Binders (various sizes)
- Christmas –
  - 60 small umbrellas (one per member)
  - Family sized toiletries
  - Toothbrushes/toothpaste
  - Hand sanitizer
  - Pencils (regular or colored)

## Pathways

- Volunteers to adopt a room in the Rapid Re-housing project (bathroom, kitchen, etc and fill it with necessary accompaniments)
- Drives for toiletries, diapers, cleaning supplies
- Filing cabinets
- Christmas –
  - children's gifts ages 2-18yrs,
  - need people to adopt families for holidays

## Aspires

- Volunteers to "adopt" the childcare room for VIP – mats, coloring/art supplies, toddler music and CD player, toys, daycare type items
- Educational games for teens for PIP program
- Plastic ware and additional beverages
- Donated tickets for DaVinci Science Center, museums, local theaters, movies and local events
- Christmas –
  - Gifts for children ages newborn - 3 years
  - Gifts for adolescents ages 12 - 18 years

## Homeless Supportive Services

- Certificates for program graduates
- Food, party supplies for holiday party
- Prepared food for party
- Candy
- All needs for end of Dec.



**Get in the Holiday Spirit!  
Support the Lehigh County Conference of  
Churches**

### **Family Fun Night**

**Friendly's Restaurant  
Cedar Crest Blvd in Dorneyville  
610-770-9883**

**Monday, December 7, 2009**

**5:00 PM to 8:00 PM**

*Bake Sale*

*Kids enter Friendly's Coloring Contest!*

A portion of money taken in at Friendly's during this time will be donated to the Lehigh County Conference of Churches Linkage Program to feed, clothe, and shelter the homeless and needy.

*Valid on dine-in and take-out orders*



## PROGRAM NEEDS

The Homelessness Prevention Program is accepting new clients who are in need of budgetary assistance. Please contact Sheri Lopez, Homelessness Prevention Coordinator at 610-433-6421 or e-mail at [slopez@lehighchurches.org](mailto:slopez@lehighchurches.org).

The Soup Kitchen continues to need food serving products, such as paper plates, paper cups, plastic ware, paper towels and napkins. Should you wish to donate such items, please contact Charles Brannon, Soup Kitchen Coordinator at 484-664-2994 or e-mail him at [cbrannon@lehighchurches.org](mailto:cbrannon@lehighchurches.org).

The Administrative Office of the Conference is in need of office supplies such as Xerox paper, colored Xerox paper, tablets, pens and file folders. Should you have access to any of these items, please contact Gigi Pacheco at 610-433-6421 or e-mail her at [gpacheco@lehighchurches.org](mailto:gpacheco@lehighchurches.org).

The reception area of our Chew Street location is in need of approximately 25 or more hard seat/back chairs. Non-cloth type chairs are preferred such as vinyl, hard plastic or leather. Please contact Thomas Smith, Operation Director at 610-439-8653 or e-mail him at [tsmith@lehighchurches.org](mailto:tsmith@lehighchurches.org).

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

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

**DAYBREAK**—The Christmas Season is right around the corner and with it we recognize the needs of:

- Daybreak Member Volunteers who staff the reception desk, vacuum and mop, and in many other ways keep Daybreak a welcoming place. Help make the Member Volunteers' Christmas merry by filling their "wish list" of 3 items totaling \$25.00, or one (1) item at \$25.00.
- For our members: family size toiletries, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, and aftershave cologne, shaving cream, combs and brushes, body powder, body lotions, gloves and socks.
- For our Christmas Party: cookies, pretzels, chips, Christmas candies
- The kitchen needs an electric knife for carving meat, a small folding step ladder and a Professional Ultimate Multi-Chopper.
- Art supplies are needed such as sun catchers, paint by numbers, ceramics, latch hook projects.

Donations are needed by December 17th. Thank you. If you have any questions or concerns please call Christine or Sue at (610) 820-5049.

## ADMINISTRATIVE HELP NEEDED

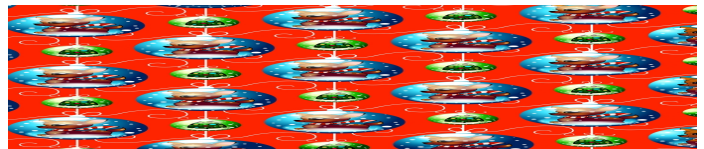
It isn't always easy to ask for help. It isn't always easy to call or visit a strange office to seek information and services. You can be the pleasant face or the calming voice for people needing assistance at our Pathways office. Got some morning availability? We'd love to teach you about the Lehigh County Conference of Churches and its many programs, so that you can staff our front desk and help direct those in need to the appropriate staff person or program. Additional duties may include copying, filing and assisting staff with paperwork.

## HELP US HELP THOSE LESS FORTUNATE: RESOURCE COUNSELORS NEEDED

Assist people to move along their own particular "Pathways" towards efficiency. The Lehigh County Conference of Churches needs volunteers to work with individuals experiencing loss of work, emergency needs and homelessness. Resource Counselors conduct intake interviews, make referrals to partner agencies, schedule appointments and follow the progress each person or family makes towards independence. Training and supervision is provided. Minimum time requirement: one-half day per week.

## HELP STRENGTHEN OUR ORGANIZATION

The Lehigh County Conference of Churches is seeking community members with Human Resource experience to join our Personnel Committee. Members create and review job descriptions, create and oversee personnel policy and make recommendations to the Board of Directors. Tasks may also include reviewing health insurance and staff salaries. The Personnel Committee meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 3pm.



## SHARE YOUR CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

**Adopt a Family** from our Pathways or Aspires program for Christmas. Those interested will be given information on a family in need, including ages, sizes, and interests of family members. Volunteers can then purchase holiday gifts for the family. Participants can sign up anytime before December 1st and items should be delivered by December 15<sup>th</sup>. Contact Abby Goldfarb for details 610-439-8653. x16.



### STIMULUS RENTAL ASSISTANCE CHANGES LIVES

Susie lost her job, quickly found another but her hours were reduced and she no longer could pay her rent. She and her son were facing eviction. When Susie came to LCCC Pathways, we found addi-

tional issues; her gas was shut-off and there was mold in the bathroom and living room. Deanne, the Director, was able to contact the apartment manager and they came out to fix the mold and a hole that was in the ceiling. We are currently negotiating with the landlord to include water, sewer and trash in her rent.

We are working on getting a checking account for her, billings in her own name and employment that is more consistent than what she has now to stabilize her housing situation.

A church adopted her and her son for Christmas so they will be able to enjoy the holidays.

As our first client to receive stimulus money we came across some bumps in the road but are working nicely to help this family become stabilized and they are extremely thankful.

**Priority for this special assistance is based on the following criteria set by the government:**

#### Homelessness Prevention

1. 10 day eviction letter
2. 30 day eviction letter
3. Letter from landlord about to start eviction process
4. Utility shut-offs leading to eviction
5. Code Enforcement closing building

Clients will need income to be able to be self sustaining. (Situational needs such as medical bills or an automobile accident/loss of transportation etc, lead to potential homelessness)

#### Rapid Re-housing

1. Street homeless (living in a situation that is unfit for human habitation)
2. Clients living in shelters for more than 7 days with income
3. Clients doubling up less than 6 months with income
4. Clients living in shelters for more than 7 days with limited or no income
5. Clients doubling up less than 6 months with limited or no income

Clients have a work history but because of the economy they had a decrease in income or are having difficulty finding full-time employment.

We invite people who find themselves in any of these situations to:

Visit the Conference's Pathways Housing and Referral program which has now moved to

**544 Hamilton St., Allentown:  
drop-in hours 9:30 to Noon  
Monday -Friday**

Allentown residents, our doors are open to you NOW.

Lehigh County citizens who live outside Allentown may apply as soon as Lehigh County stimulus assistance is available. Call 610-439-8653 to inquire.

Deanne Malacsics, LCCC Pathways Director

# Thank You, Volunteers

As the Volunteer Coordinator, I am privileged to bear witness to the outpouring of support given by our volunteers. It may not seem like a lot to serve a meal once a month or help with a mailing but consider this:

In October alone, 621 volunteers contributed over 1,915 hours of service to the Conference. If we continue to be blessed with this level of participation in a year's time, 7,452 volunteers would devote 22,980 hours of service to Lehigh County Conference of Churches. That's equivalent to almost 48 full time staff!

Our staff and the men, women and children that we serve are highly appreciative of your gifts of time and talent. Volunteer hours are as good as money in the bank to us and we couldn't accomplish our expansive mission without you. On behalf of everyone touched by the work of the Lehigh County Conference of Churches, we thank you for your participation and your commitment to providing for those in need.

Abby Goldfarb



### End of the Year Giving

Now may be an excellent time to consider an end of the year gift through a qualified charitable distribution from your IRA to the Lehigh County Conference of Churches. Please consult your financial or tax advisor. Call Rev. Nelson or Ira Faro with questions at 610-433-6421.



## Community Bulletin Board



### MINISTRY WITH OUR ELDERS (SENIOR ADULTS)

For Clergy, Secretaries of Congregations,  
Pastoral Care Visitors, and Other Caregivers

Luther Crest (800 Hausman Road, Allentown) will host a Moravian Theological Seminary course on Mondays, February 1 through March 8, 2010, 1:30-4:30 p.m. This six-week course is designed for clergy and laity who want to become more effective in ministry with the senior adults with whom they serve. Participants will have an opportunity to improve their skills of communication with older adults, as well as gain an understanding of the life issues that confront them. The course will cover the following topics: grief, dynamics and issues of dementia and aging, caring for the caregiver, life review, spirituality and faith, visitation and communication skills, effects of aging on family systems, and community resources. Cost for this 1.8 CEU course is \$50 (payable to Moravian Theological Seminary, 1220 Main Street, Bethlehem, PA 18018-6650) if registered by January 18, 2010. For more information, please contact Luther Crest's Chaplain Dianne Kareha (610-391-8210) or go to <http://www.moravianseminary.edu/conted/Spring10/elders.html>



Vision Misionera Ministries/United Faith Vision School Inc.  
457 Allen & 5<sup>th</sup> Streets, Allentown, PA 18102

### Free Christmas Musical "CONCERT"

Spanish, Jamaican, Jazz and Instrumental Music

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2009  
Time: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

AND

New Year Celebration  
Thursday, December 31, 2009  
Candle Light Service  
From 10:00 PM to 12:01 AM.

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆  
SAVE THE DATE



ART AUCTION TO BENEFIT LCCC SOUP  
KITCHEN

AT BAUM ART SCHOOL

MARCH 19, 2010

MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW.

### Faith! - A "Clash" of the Valley Choirs Celebration

has been designed to bring live classical music to the residents of the City of Allentown and surrounding areas in a unique and engaging way. It was so well received last year, that it is back by popular demand!

A cooperative partnership among the PA Sinfonia Orchestra, the Lehigh County Conference of Churches, the Community Music School, the City of Allentown, Mayor's Office-Faith-Based Initiatives, and the Allentown Symphony Hall Association will host and help to promote this unique event.

Choirs will be given the opportunity to perform in Allentown's Symphony Hall for their community, church groups, families and friends and will compete for monetary prizes to be awarded to the top choir and also top youth choir for their favorite charity. The audience may get the opportunity to "vote" for their favorite choir, so choirs are encouraged to have church groups and their friends and family attend this fun and inspirational event!

Please consider participating in what we anticipate to be a wonderful, well-attended community event...last year, we had over 700 people in the audience! We want residents of the Valley to be exposed to top-notch classical and gospel music and the best of African-American culture. This concert will embrace young and old, and while geared toward the efforts of the African-American community, it will utilize music as a universal language to bridge all cultures.

We intend for all registered choirs of this event to be involved in a pre-qualifying competition on the morning/afternoon of January 30, 2010 followed by a pre-concert reception and the concert at 7:30 pm. For more information, to register a choir online, or to reserve group tickets (for your church or organization) of 10 or more and receive the discounted \$5.00 price, view our website at: [www.PASinfonia.org](http://www.PASinfonia.org)

Additional contact information:  
Email: [PASinfonia@verizon.net](mailto:PASinfonia@verizon.net)  
or call 610.434.7811,  
Catherine DeBoeser, Executive Director

### BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

**FAITH!**  
A "Clash"  
of the  
Valley Choirs

featuring music of  
**LOCAL**  
**GOSPEL CHOIRS**  
& African American  
Composers

Sat., Jan. 30, 2010  
7:30 pm

Allentown Symphony Hall  
presented by the

For choir registrations and tickets, call  
610.434.7811  
[www.PASinfonia.org](http://www.PASinfonia.org)  
Tickets - Youth \$5 and Adult \$10  
Primary Sponsor - Rider-Pool Foundation



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

December 2009

Non-Profit Organization

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Permit #1409

Allentown, PA

**CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED**

**Ecumenical Encounters**

**December 2009**

Published by the Lehigh County  
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. William Kuntze,  
Ecumenical Director*

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

**DECEMBER AND JANUARY EVENTS**

**CHRISTMAS PEACE PILGRIMAGE**

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2009, 11:00 AM  
520 EAST BROAD STREET,  
BETHLEHEM PA

**FAITH! A "CLASH" OF THE VALLEY CHOIRS**

SATURDAY, JANUARY 30, 2010, 7:30 PM  
ALLENTOWN SYMPHONY HALL  
ALLENTOWN PA

**WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY  
SERVICE**

SUNDAY, JANUARY 31, 2010, 3:00 PM  
ST. JOHN'S UCC  
EMMAUS PA

United Way of the  
Greater Lehigh Valley



**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)