



# Lehigh County Conference of Churches

## Ecumenical Encounters

Volume 24 Number 5

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MAY 2010

### HOMELESSNESS REVISITED by Rev. Chris Nelson

*Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy God has shown you.* Mark 5:19

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When something exciting happens in our lives what is the first thing we do? Run home to tell our friends and family! What if you had no home to run to?

This is what happened to Robert and his family who fell behind in their rent due to being laid off. Community minded Robert has spent 13 years of his life as a volunteer firefighter until a few months ago when his lungs were damaged in a fire. He and his wife lost their medical coverage due to his job loss. With two children, one with autism requiring special medical attention, this family had no other resources available to them to keep them from becoming homeless. Robert and Bonnie visited the Conference of Churches fearing they would be on the street with their children in a few weeks. They left the Conference of Churches rejoicing in what God had done for them, going home to tell their friends of God's mercy.

Robert and Bonnie are among the homeless emerging populations in the Lehigh Valley. Our area reverses the national trend in that 62% of our community's homeless are families and 34% are single persons. The recession, joblessness, shelters being at capacity are among the causes, but the number one reason is domestic violence. Lord, have mercy.

Other homeless emerging populations in the Valley are youth aging out of the Children and Youth Services system and people struggling with mental health concerns who must now leave the Allentown State Hospital as it closes.

What is their greatest need? Medical care; people without homes and without insurance are often in very poor health. And they have difficulty accessing and navigating the benefits to which their former work and current citizenship entitles them. Poor health, whether it be from a serious illness or an accident is often the reason people cannot work and so they become homeless. It is a vicious circle.

We as a society pay a high price economically as

well as spiritually as we allow this vicious circle to go on. Emergency room usage as one's "primary" doctor is costly and in the long term ineffective—it keeps the cycle going. The average cost of emergency room treatment for people who are homeless, like that of imprisonment and other institutionalizations, is \$30,000 versus \$7,550 average cost annually for supportive and housing services. Can you do the math? Don't you want to run and tell your friends there is a better way to help our neighbors like Robert and Bonnie? Which way do you prefer your taxes be spent?

The scripture I cited earlier was Jesus response to the man who recovered from what we would call mental illness after Jesus sent the unclean spirit out of him and into the pig herd, causing great fear in that neighborhood. I think Jesus' point is when we "see the light," "are healed, helped, saved," we are not to seek to remain in its "glow." We are to go back to our home, back to our neighborhoods and friends, and tell them what has happened and how it has changed our lives.

That is what Robert and Bonnie did. Those of us who regularly work with people who are struggling for the basics of life try to do that, too. The Conference of Churches, working hand in hand with 40 other community partners through the 10 Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness, want to tell you our friends some of the exciting changes that are happening and invite you to get in on the action.

People's lives are changed when we work together as a region, when community dollars are most effectively used to provide housing and services. There is a sense of accomplishment when we advocate together for best use of state and federal dollars to create Affordable Housing Trust funds which will build homes for years to come. We can truly set the prisoner free, cause the sick to rise to new life, when we work together on prison and hospital discharge planning. There is no need to be afraid. We can connect you to the action. Call. The life you change may be your own.

# Lehigh County Conference of Churches

*Addressing Hunger, Homelessness, Mental Health, At-Risk Youth, Christian Unity*

## 2010 Annual Meeting *Building Our Future*

*What we look for does not come to pass. God finds a way for what none foresaw. Euripides*

**When:** Thursday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2010, 5:30 PM

**Where:** Third Day Worship Center  
1700 Hanover Avenue, Allentown

Directions available at: [www.lehighchurches.org](http://www.lehighchurches.org)

*Pastors and Lay Representatives especially encouraged to attend.*



### 5:30 PM

- Registration
- Meet and greet
- Visit displays to learn about current and new Lehigh County Conference of Churches programs

Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.  
Proverbs 16:3

### 6:00 PM

- **What's new at the Lehigh County Conference of Churches?**
  - HPRP Stimulus Rental Assistance: Helping people keep their homes testimonials
  - Clearing House Grant: Helping more people find & keep housing & support
  - Aspires Mentoring Expansion
  - The Value of Volunteers: Highlighting our Volunteer Ministry
- **What You Hope Us to Be**
  - Discussion of Long Range Possibilities
- **Service Awards**
  - Ecumenical Service Award for Living Christian Unity
  - Election of officers and Board of Directors
  - Years of Service awards to staff & board members
  - Passing of the budget for 2010-11

**Please respond by May 25th.**

Mail to:  
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)



I/We will be attending:

\_\_\_\_\_

Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Address

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Church Affiliation or Organization you are representing

Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Payable to Conference of Churches  
**Cost is \$20.00 per person. Please register by May 25th.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

Lehigh County Conference of Churches – Justice and Advocacy

### Congregations in Mission: Finding Common Causes

Wednesday, June 9, 2010  
6:30 pm - 9:00 pm

**Location:** Asbury United Methodist Church  
in the church parlor (upper level)  
1533 Springhouse Road  
(Springhouse Rd. at Walbert Ave.)  
Allentown, PA 18104  
610-398-2577

**Program:**

This is a gathering for representatives of mission (outreach / social concerns /peace & justice) committees of Lehigh Valley congregations for conversation about ways that we can work together more closely.

Many of our congregations have mission (outreach/social concerns/peace & justice) committees with similar focus or goals. This is an opportunity to find out what other congregations are doing in the way of missions and outreach, and to begin forming partnerships to work for common goals.

The meeting room will have table space available for participants who have displays or resource materials to share.

**Schedule:**

6:30-7 pm Coffee, Cookies, Conversation, and Resource Displays  
7:00-9 pm Structured conversation among participants to identify areas where we have similar goals and to form new partnerships.

**Registration:**

It will be helpful for our planning if you can let us know you are coming (There is no charge for registration.)

For further information and pre-registration (by June 8), visit [mission.pppjr.org](http://mission.pppjr.org) , or contact the LCCC office at 610-433-8421.

Sponsored by the Lehigh County Conference of Churches • Justice and Advocacy Committee, and hosted by Asbury UMC, Church and Society Committee.

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Sponsored by the Lehigh County Conference of Churches • Justice and Advocacy Committee, and hosted by Asbury UMC, Church and Society Committee.

# 2 WHEELS 4 MEALS



**SCOOTER/MOTORCYCLE RIDERS  
FEEDING OUR HUNGRY NEIGHBORS**



**SATURDAY, JUNE 12, 2010**

**Registration: KEYSTONE PARK,  
RT. 329 & GREEN STREET  
BATH, PA  
Check-in time 9-11 AM**

**RIDER & PASSENGER FEE  
\$20 PRE-REGISTRATION BY JUNE 1  
2 WHEELS 4 MEALS Tee Shirt, BBQ, Prize Ticket  
\$15 BBQ & TICKET ONLY  
Day of Ride Registration – BBQ & Ticket Only: \$20**

**RIDE STARTS AND ENDS AT KEYSTONE PARK**

**50+ MILE LOOP WITH REST STOPS  
Separate routes for big and small dogs**

**BBQ STARTS AT 1 PM**

**LIVE MUSIC**

**MILLER BLOOD CENTER VAN ON SITE**

**TO THE BENEFIT OF  
EMERGENCY FOOD PROGRAMS IN ALLENTOWN AND BATH**

**Make checks payable to: LEHIGH COUNTY CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES  
Send to: 534 Chew Street, Allentown, PA 18102**

**Questions? Call SCOOTDUDE at 610-433-6421  
E-mail: [scootdude@rcn.com](mailto:scootdude@rcn.com)**

## Day Break Hang-In Hang-Out

Where do you spend your day when you have a mental health diagnosis? How do you cope when daily activities become a struggle? What assistance is available to help you find and hold a job? Daybreak fills those needs.

Daybreak, a program of the Lehigh County Conference of Churches, welcomes those in treatment for mental illness, drugs or alcohol, those with HIV/AIDS, and the elderly. Daybreak promotes recovery through nutritional support, teaching work readiness, mentoring social and life skills, promoting good hygiene and offering a safe environment. Three meals a day and activities such as art class, music therapy, bingo, and movie time are provided.

One program at Daybreak, Hang in and Hang out, is organized by Doris Farrar, a parish nurse from Asbury Methodist Church in Allentown. Each month, she comes prepared with a simple idea. The day I visited the program, the theme was “Spring has Sprung... I Hope”. She brought a few props, a spring bonnet, some flowers and a permeating sense of joy and peace. Each individual was allowed their moment to talk and say why spring was important to them. Through group interaction, Doris aids socialization and finding out about the world around us. Healthy living tips were given, such as how long do you keep food in the refrigerator.

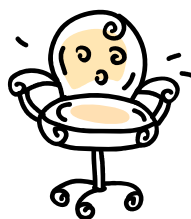
Doris was assisted in blood pressure monitoring by Sandy Lerman RN, a volunteer Parish Nurse from Sacred Heart Hospital. Doris doesn't usually do the blood pressures. Doris stated, “I don't work at Sacred Heart anymore, but it's fine because you said “volunteer”. I am a Parish Nurse at St. Andrew's Evangelical Lutheran Church. For many of those attending Daybreak this was a much needed service, and is often their sole access point into the health care system. Through the sharing and the laughter, you could feel the warmth, the acceptance and the friendship radiating from all. Clearly, Doris's plan works!

Daybreak is always accepting monetary donations, volunteers, mentors and in kind donations. For more information contact Christine Morrison the Program Director at 610-820-5049.

### Stay Tuned for our New Look Website with Added Features

The LCCC website is undergoing a complete overhaul – a new look, new features, and new ways to donate your time, talent, and treasure. For instance, for your convenience we are in the process of being approved for donations through PayPal.

We hope to have the new look [www.lehighchurches.com](http://www.lehighchurches.com) up and running by this time next month and, when it is, we'll welcome your comments.



## Chair Replacements for Reception Room

In June construction renovations will take place at the 534 Chew Street reception room in which new ceiling tile, light fixtures, chair railing, base trim, painting of walls, installation of a new bulletin board and fire door will be done to provide a new atmosphere for visitors.

What will complement this area is new hard type Stacking Chairs. We estimate that 40 such chairs are needed to replace the current chairs that are of different sizes and colors. The estimated cost for 40 chairs is between \$1,000.00 to \$1,500.00. We are looking for donors towards this effort and such monetary contributions will be recognized.

Please contact Thomas Smith, Operations Director at 610-439-8653 ext. 19 or e-mail at [tsmith@lehighchurches.org](mailto:tsmith@lehighchurches.org) if you wish to make a monetary contribution.



## JUSTICE AND ADVOCACY UPDATES

### NATIONAL HOUSING TRUST FUND:

- Urge Senators Casey and Specter to support the funding of the National Housing Trust Fund at \$1.065 billion
- In the U.S., there are only 37 rental homes available/affordable for every 100 households with incomes below 30% of their area median
- Scarcity of housing is the principle cause of homelessness in America
- Every billion provide to the Trust Fund will support construction of 10,000 rental homes, 15,100 new construction jobs and 3,800 new jobs in ongoing operations

### HUNGER/BREAD FOR THE WORLD WORKSHOP OUTCOMES:

- Over 40 people representing 15 congregations gathered to focus on hunger
- A workshop for representatives of mission (outreach / social concerns /peace & justice) committees of Lehigh Valley congregations for conversation about ways that we can work together more closely and to begin forming partnerships to work for common goals, June 9, 6:30 pm at Asbury United Methodist Church, Allentown. All are welcome
- A representative group will visit Rep. Charlie Dent to urge support to protect and strengthen key tax credits that make a difference to low income families including Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), the Child Tax Credit and the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program. The EITC does more to lift children out of poverty than any other government program including school lunch and food stamp programs.

## PROGRAM NEEDS

- **Daybreak** - A reminder, the warm weather is arriving and Daybreak loves to go on picnics! We usually go to Cedar Beach and enjoy the warm weather over some hot dogs and burgers. Our members enjoy drinking cold Iced Tea and playing Frisbee. Given this, we are still looking for picnic donations of Hot Dogs, Hamburgers, Rolls, pickles, olives, chips, pretzels, soda and Iced tea mix. The members would also like a Pokeno set, sets of Dominoes and National Geographic Magazines. The kitchen needs a cheese grater, meat brush, a garlic press and an egg slicer.
- **General Conference Needs:** Hard Back or vinyl chairs for our Chew Street reception room, Commercial Type Vacuum Cleaner, Adjustable Office Desk Chairs, Paper Products-Plates, Plastic Forks, Spoons and knives for Soup Kitchen, Office supplies-Xerox Paper.
- **Pathways:** is in need of air conditioners for many of our HUD 2 and HPRP clients. Some of our clients have chronic health conditions and/take medications. These conditions and/or medications make it extremely difficult, if not dangerous, in the summer months, without an air conditioner. We are requesting new or gently used air conditioners.
- **Soup Kitchen:** is in need of paper products such as plates, cups, napkins.

### Thomas Theatre Organ... looking for a home

Looking to donate it, it's in good condition, however, will have to have it tuned. Full pedal.

Please contact Marilyn O'Brien, mjobrien@ptd.net, if you or any church would like this beautiful instrument.



## Daybreak Members Learn to Press Flowers



Linda Conrad, an expert in pressed flower arrangements, was the presenter April 15, at the monthly meeting of the Daybreak Green Club, a horticultural therapy program sponsored by the Allentown Garden Club and Lehigh County Master Gardeners. Linda had been a rousing success in December, 2009, when she taught members to create pressed flower greeting cards. On April 15th, the 19 participants created pressed flower decoupage decorative tiles, as well as smaller refrigerator magnets. According to members the class was "Excellent-It's great!"

Linda is a member of the Worldwide Pressed Flower Guild and has competed in the Philadelphia Flower Show the past 4 years. This year her three entries garnered two honorable mentions and a third place. A resident of Oley, Linda raises and presses her own flowers and donated her time and materials to Daybreak. She expressed her delight at the interest and creativity shown by the participants. We thank Linda for sharing her time and talent with Daybreak members.

### SAVE THE DATES

**October 10, 2010**

2010 Allentown Annual Crop Walk

**October 13, 2010**

2010 Together We Can Luncheon

Look for more information in upcoming newsletters.

## JOIN US FOR A TOUR OF THE LEHIGH COUNTY OF CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES

Upcoming tours:            May 20th, 2010            June 17th, 2010            July 15th, 2010

All tours are held at the Chew Street location at 11:30AM. Please call Gigi Pacheco, Administrative Assistant, to attend:

# Bulletin Board

## The Phoebe Institute on Aging

invites you to explore  
**Interdisciplinary Approaches to End of Life Care**  
 presented by author  
 The Rev. Dr. Martha Jacobs  
 and a panel of interdisciplinary professionals

June 10, 2010  
 8:30 a.m. – noon  
 Lehigh Valley Health Network  
 Cedar Crest & I-78  
 Auditorium

To register, go to [www.phoebe.org/events](http://www.phoebe.org/events)  
 or call Helen Haas at the Phoebe Institute on Aging,  
 610-794-5135.

This program is free and open to the public; however, space is limited. Please register today!

## Director of Education Heidelberg Union Church

Heidelberg Church is looking for a creative and energetic Director of Education. It is our hope this individual will support, plan, implement, and oversee the Christian Education program possibly including but not limited to: the Christian Education Classes, Vacation Bible School, youth/ intergenerational activities. The position currently is for 20 (flexible) hours per week. If interested and qualified, please send resume with references to the attention of the Christian Education Committee, Heidelberg United Church of Christ, 5187 Irvin Road, Slatington PA 18080.

## Peace Camp 2010

Will be held from July 26-30th at First Presbyterian Church in Allentown. We welcome elementary-school aged children as campers and adults and teens as volunteers. You can call LEPOCO at 610-691-8730, if you have any questions.

## Immigration Opportunites For Learning and Discussion

Hope UCC, Allentown, Peace and Justice team offers two opportunities for learning about our immigration laws.  
**Sunday, May 9, 9:30 AM** - Erika Sutherland, Professor at Muhlenberg College, "Issues of immigration and ways of responding as people of faith."  
**Tuesday, June 1, 7:00PM** - Donna Schaper, Sr. Pastor, Judson Memorial Church, New York City, Judson's involvement in the New Sanctuary Movement as they walked with members who were almost deported.

## LCCC ECUMENICAL DIRECTOR WANTED

We are now accepting resumes of candidates for the full time position of Ecumenical Director.

Send resumes to [tsmith@lehighchurches.org](mailto:tsmith@lehighchurches.org).

A full job description is available on request.

Major job responsibilities are:

1. Build relationships with congregations, pastors, and lay leaders which enhance their motivation and ability to do community mission.
2. Equip the LCCC staff, Board of Directors, and key lay leaders for mission interpretation to the congregations and community.
3. Financial and volunteer development.

Qualifications include: A call to ecumenical ministry and sufficient congregational experience and theological training to work effectively with culturally and spiritually diverse congregations.



## Come visit the Family Lending Library

Located inside the Family Thrift Shoppe at 1804 Leithsville Road, Hellertown Pennsylvania.

We have a Christian Library full of DVD's, books, videos and more, all available free of charge on a loan basis.

We carry titles from authors such as:

Tedd Tripp	TD Jakes	Joyce Meyer
Beth Moore	Charles and Andy Stanley	
Dr. James Dobson	Chip Ingram	Kevin Leman

and much more

We also have a large Spanish section. Come visit us.

Monday—Friday 9:00 AM—1:30 PM

## GO GREEN!

Maps of Lehigh Valley Community Gardens are available at: [www.lehigh.extension.psu.edu](http://www.lehigh.extension.psu.edu) or [www.acga.localharvest.org](http://www.acga.localharvest.org)

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

*May 2010*

**Non-Profit Organization**  
U. S. Postage Paid  
Permit #1409  
Allentown, PA

**Ecumenical Encounters**

**May 2010**

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*

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

**JUNE EVENTS**

**JUNE 3, 2010**

ANNUAL MEETING  
THIRD DAY WORSHIP CENTER  
1700 HANOVER AVENUE, ALLENTOWN  
5:30 PM—8:00 PM

**JUNE 9, 2010**

CONGREGATIONS IN MISSION:  
FINDING COMMON CAUSES  
ASBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
1533 SPRINGHOUSE ROAD  
ALLENTOWN PA 18104  
6:30 PM—9:00 PM

**JUNE 12, 2010**

2 WHEELS 4 MEALS  
KEYSTONE PARK  
RT. 329 & GREEN STREET  
BATH, PA  
REGISTRATION 9:00 AM—11:00 AM

United Way of the  
Greater Lehigh Valley



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

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