

Yokefellow  
Prison Ministry

Lehigh Valley  
Council

# The Yoke and the Cross



**AUGUST 2013 –  
OCTOBER 2013**

The Voice of the Yokefellow Prison Ministry  
in the Lehigh Valley

Yokefellow Prison Ministry  
PO Box 3114 - Wescosville, PA 18106  
610-820-8469 - [www.yokefellowpa.org](http://www.yokefellowpa.org)

The Yoke and the Cross brings the latest news and events of the Lehigh Valley Council of Yokefellow Prison Ministry to the volunteers, friends, and inmates involved with Yokefellow.

**Council Director**  
Charles L. Goodge

**Council Pastoral Advisor**  
Pastor Gary Morrison

**Council Chairperson**  
Lisa M. Perry

**Vice Chairman**  
Rev. Allen Kline

**Treasurer**  
William Truckenmiller

**Secretary**  
Scott Redfield

**The Director's Chair:** Greetings to all of you friends and volunteers. It is a very busy time here at Yokefellow, but I will get to that shortly. First, I want to mention our former Council Director, Wayne Benjamin.

Last week, I approached the Board of Directors with the idea that we should bestow upon Wayne the title of Council Director Emeritus, since he was the founder of the Lehigh Valley Council of Yokefellow Prison Ministry, and he had served as our Council Director for twenty-eight years, until he had to resign to take care of his wife Fleda. He also served as Director of the State Board of Directors for many years. The Board obviously was unanimous in its decision to concur, and so it shall be. Not a day after we had decided to do this, I received an e-mail informing me of Fleda's condition, which was not good, and the next day I was informed that she had gone to be with the Lord. Her and Wayne had been married for sixty-one years, and it obviously is a trying time for him, so we ask that you remember him and his family in your prayers. I know he will be very grateful to all of you.

Please remember, Sunday August 18 is our annual picnic, at Lockridge Park in Alburtis. It begins at 2:00 pm and goes on until dusk. We will have lots of food, soft drinks, along with games, fellowship and singing. Anyone who is a volunteer, potential volunteer, supporter, or simply want to know more about the ministry, are cordially invited to attend. There is no charge but please call us to let us know how many will be coming. Also our annual fund raising banquet is September 28, 2013. Please complete your reservation from the last page of this newsletter and return it to us in the enclosed envelope.

The Tuesday night Timothy program is getting up steam, with volunteers and former inmates attending the Bible Study. Also, anyone wanting to learn more about Yokefellow or wanting to volunteer, are always welcome. It is at Bethany UMC, 1208 Brookside Road Wescosville, PA from 7:30 pm until 9:00 pm.

Finally, we always can use volunteers. God has blessed us with great volunteers, but the need is substantial. Especially for the youth. The longer they spend time in jail, the more likely it is that it will become a way of life. Consider the Juvenile Detention Center. If you can't volunteer, consider donating to the Bible Fund. We give Bibles to all who request them, and that fund is very low right now. Pray for us all and ask God for guidance on where He would lead you.

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

August 18 – 2 pm  
Appreciation Picnic  
Lockridge Park,  
525 Franklin St, Alburtis, PA

Volunteer Training  
September 14  
9 am – 1 pm  
October 12  
9 am – 1 pm

Annual Banquet  
September 28 – 6 pm  
Asbury UMC  
1533 Springhouse Rd,  
Allentown PA

Annual Conference  
October 4 & 5, 2013  
Lewisburg, PA

*Charles L. Goodge*

## A TREE OR TUMBLWEED?



### **Council Director Emeritus Wayne Benjamin's wife**

**Fleda V. Benjamin** (nee) Meadows of Wescosville, PA died on Wednesday evening, August 7, 2013. She was 81 years old. Fleda was homemaker and a former nurses and ambulance aide. She loved quilting and baking. Fleda was a member of Bethany United Methodist Church where she was a choir member for 30 years in addition to volunteering for many other jobs. **Survivors:** She was married to her beloved husband, Wayne N. Benjamin for 61 years; and a devoted mother to her sons, David A. (Kathy), Larry (Gayle) and Mark Benjamin (Sue); and is also survived by her brother, Lynn Meadows (Ethel); in addition to 12 grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her son, Gary. **Services:** Relatives and friends are invited to her viewing on Monday, from 10:30 a.m. to noon at the Bethany Un. Methodist Church, 1208 Brookside Rd., Allentown (Wescosville), PA 18106 followed by services at noon. Interment Highland Cemetery, Allentown. Arrangements by Tomlinson Funeral Home, P.C., Bensalem, PA. **Contributions:** Memorial contributions in Fleda's name may be made to the American Cancer Society Believers in Hope, 480 Norristown, Rd., Suite 150, Blue Bell, PA 19422.

**Published in Morning Call on August 9, 2013. Cards may be sent to Wayne Benjamin at:**  
Statesman Woods  
2619 Trenton Road  
Levittown, PA 19056

**Psalm 1:3** "He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers."

The results of genuine grace and godly meditation in the Word of God is to produce orchards full of fruitful and well-grounded Christians, Christians whose roots are constantly being replenished by the Streams of Living waters that is Our Glorious Saviour, Jesus Christ.

This does not mean that a tree is ever a finished product, but an ongoing work of growth in the Grace of God. A work of growth is of necessity a slow process, growing through the mysterious workings of God's Holy Spirit, who uses our exposure to the precious life-giving Word of God. We need to be diligently reading His word in a devotional way. We need to be staying fresh and supple, constantly being refreshed and softened by grace. We need to be growing in grace by our maintaining a current relationship with our Saviour, who is the Lord of all grace. We need to be resting on His all-sufficient grace that has justified us, and is daily sanctifying us. His grace in us is relentlessly with us, O what a joy to have such a faithful God, pursuing us, following us, walking with us, leading and guiding us.

We do not take any of his gifts to us for granted and must never allow it to become a distant memory. We keep the daily working of his grace treasured up in our hearts, this keeps, and preserves and strengthens what He has done for us, and is continuing to doing, afresh work of grace in our hearts, we remain grateful and thankful. We don't have to have long memories, but loving ones. That is only possible if we have our roots in Jesus Christ. A tree does not become restless, it does not move to shadier parts of the orchard, nor does it seek out a greater flow of water further upstream or downstream alongside the river. No, but its roots will simply go down deeper to obtain the water it needs. This tree is immovable, as it has already found its rest, and all it needs to grow and produce the fruit God has ordained for it to produce.

**Psalm 83:13** "Make them like tumbleweed, O my God, like chaff before the wind."

Granted the psalmist is writing about the enemies of God's people, but I could not help being drawn into thinking about how often those who claim to be true believers are actually the enemies of God's people, not sheep, but in disguise, just like the wolves in Sheep's clothing that we are warned about so many times in the New Testament.

God's people described as trees planted by rivers, also as the branches of the One true Vine (John 15:1). We are like living plants with roots, and branches drawing on the power of the Lord for our survival. We are a living organism, connected to Our Living God.

In John 15:2 we are told that "He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit". A frightening thought. Now in no way do I think that this implies a loss of salvation, but it certainly speaks of what is effectively deadwood being cut off and cast out. Any false believers will be separated from the body as an act of judgment and discrimination. A dead branch can never produce fruit. The only purpose of the Church is to produce fruit, why then are we so concerned when deadwood drifts away from our churches? Why are we so introspective when chaff is blown away by the Lord in response to the prayer in Psalm 83:13? Why are we surprised to consider that Tumbleweed and false believers do exist? The Word warns us of this reality.

I think it's because of our love for the lost that we can be heartbroken to discover the true character of some whom were close to use, whom we loved. It must have been even more difficult for the Lord to have chosen Judas, knowing full well what he would do, entrusting him with the finances, and lovingly treating

**If you would like a group to come to your church to speak about Yokefellow Prison Ministry please contact Chuck at 610-820-8469.**

Are you willing to share the Gospel with those in prison but don't know how to start? Come to the **Timothy Program**, Bethany United Methodist Church, **Tuesdays, from 7:30 – 9:00 pm** and learn how you can serve the Lord by sharing God's love with those in need of hearing how God can change their lives.

**TRAINING FOR NEW AND CURRENT YOKEFELLOW VOLUNTEERS**

If you are interested in becoming a Yokefellow Prison Ministry volunteer or you haven't had training this year, please come to the training sessions that will be held on September 14 and October 12 from 9 am to 1 pm. Please call the office at 610-820-8469 for more information.

him like a brother. The Lord did not fail Judas; on the contrary Judas is the one whose habitual embezzlements added up to one final betrayal.

The Lord knows full well our feelings of betrayal when that which we now know was tumbleweed blowing into our congregation and staying with us for a while. The attachments we formed were entirely one-sided, never reciprocated. There is no growth in deadwood, in tumbleweed, only in trees and vines. Then when the working of the Holy Spirit becomes too much for the tumble weed, just like when a gentle breeze slowly gathering strength and almost imperceptibly becoming a strongly blowing wind. Just as deadwood and tumbleweed cannot discern the mysterious workings of Holy Spirit, but they can see and feel the effects of His work blowing through the lives of the trees as the wind is visible in the leaves of the trees and vine branches as the wind blows through them. Unlike the trees and vines which are well rooted and only move in the wind in a small way, but benefit from the cooling effects. The only natural response for tumble weed is to move on, blown out the doors of the local church and moving on somewhere where they can temporarily settle down until the Holy Spirit's work disturbs their false sense of peace. And when they become disquieted again, they endlessly repeat their cycles of coming's in and going's out again and again. What a waste, but with weed it's inevitable.

The sadness is not just in the fact that they show signs of life; signs of God's grace as they move in the wind, but then move away. The sadness is also in their temporary abode with us, there is an effect that they have on the true brethren, these tumbleweeds, that are unwitting emissaries of the wolves we mentioned earlier. Their work is quite clearly not to put down roots, and grow beside the river and produce fruit, but they will never see themselves as branches attached to the vine, and as such these tumbleweeds never intend to put down roots. In fact they will resist all efforts and workings of the Holy Spirit and His servants in the Church; resisting all the Pastor's and elders, and ultimately even all the members urgings to become members. They resist placing their roots down, to be grafted into the life-blood of the Church, to remain constant, patiently growing in Grace, and not blowing in the wind endlessly seeking greener pastures. Their work is to make others as restless as they are; to cause and instigate trouble and unhappiness, to instill a consumer mentality into the hearts of God's people, to make them as unhappy as they can. Their task is to be like Job's wife and his "comforters" who never really understood Job, nor his predicament. Though they certainly knew full well how to make his problem worse than it was, and it was severe. False words, false counsel, false comfort is no help at all. This is possibly why God in His wisdom has made them into tumbleweed, chaff, because at some point they must be blown away, blown out of the Church.

"Lord, protect your people from deadwood, from tumbleweed, the servants of our enemy!"

Dear reader, please search out your heart, are you a tree, a branch of the Vine, or are you Tumbleweed. Turn to your Saviour and beg for Grace, for a chance to put your roots down into the Church, into your local Church and stop being restless, endlessly looking for that perfect Church that will always elude your grasp.

Gary Morrison  
(Pastor: Trinity Baptist Church  
Allentown PA)

## Youth in Prison

A failed life? A failed start in life? A failure to fit in? What went wrong? For some it might a lack of acceptance, feelings of rejection, from parents, peers, siblings, community. A lack of love, understanding, a falling out with society, not being accepted by others leading to anger and wrong behavior.

Rejection, hurt – runs deep. Everybody needs love, acceptance. A sense of self-worth; all of which is more valued than gold.

*"When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Mark 10:14*

So, where does self-worth or the lack of it all begin? I suspect it begins in the home, maybe in school, maybe in the neighborhood. I don't know, but I do know . . . I see the lack of love, understanding, self-worth in the young faces, in the eyes of the youth across the table from my wife and I in the Juvenile Youth Detention Center.

What do we see? Hurting kids, looking for answers they've yet to find. Answers only God can give through the scriptures we speak from across the table. Reflecting on Jesus words to *"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."* We begin to speak and connect with these young lives, letting them know how Jesus fits in with their daily living and how he wishes to connect with them. They are impacted by His truth. The blessings my wife and I receive are greater than what we can ever give. These kids are poor in spirit and rich in need . . . a need only God's word can fill as we speak His words. His *"Love never fails."*

The Apostle Paul reminds us . . . *"for, everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? **And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?*** Romans 10:13-14 With that question *"And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?"* I ask you . . . Will you bring the Good News to those who are hurting? To those who need to connect to God's love?

**Yokefellow needs you to volunteer at the Youth Detention Center.** Please give them hope. "And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us." Romans 5:5 Consider this need, their future and respond to Yokefellow's Youth Detention Center Coordinator Nick Rafferty at: [bcmarshal@msn.com](mailto:bcmarshal@msn.com).

Remember . . . *"Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ."* Romans 10:17 Thanks for your continued interest in Yokefellows future and the future of our Youth.

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO PLACE AN AD IN OUR BANQUET PROGRAM FOR SEPTEMBER 28, 2013, PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE FOR MORE INFORMATION.**

**If you are interested in sharing the Word of God with those incarcerated, we can order Bibles directly from the publisher and mail them to the individuals. Current prices for Bibles are: \$6.00, large print NIV \$5.00, Spanish NIV \$4.00. Please forward a check to the office and mark it for the Bible Fund. Thank you to all those who have contributed in the past.**

Let me hear joy and gladness;  
let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Psalm 51: 8-11

### **CHRISTMAS FOR CHILDREN OF INMATES**

If you would like to donate \$5.00 we are willing to purchase gifts for the children of inmates on your behalf and this year will have a party for the children. Please send your donation in the enclosed envelope. These are great opportunities for churches, Sunday Schools and children to collect monies for those who are seeking the Lord!