



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

MAY – JULY 2012

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 Goodge
yokefellowpa@yahoo.com

Council Chairperson

Lisa M. Perry

Vice Chairman

Rev. Allen Kline

Treasurer

William Truckenmiller

UPCOMING EVENTS:



**VOLUNTEER
APPRECIATION
PICNIC**

END OF AUGUST

AN EMAIL WILL BE SENT OUT TO
NOTIFY YOU OF THE DATE.

PLEASE MAKE SURE WE HAVE
YOUR CURRENT EMAIL ADDRESS.



**FUNDRAISING
BANQUET:**

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29
AT

ASBURY UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH
1533 SPRINGHOUSE ROAD
ALLENTOWN PA 18104

LOOK FOR THE
FLYER IN YOUR EMAIL

The Director's Chair

It is hard to believe that it has been six months since I took over as Council Director, and although it has been challenging, it has also been very rewarding. I would first like to thank each and every one of the volunteers and supporters for all of the assistance that you have given to this ministry over the years, without which, this ministry would not exist. I do thank God for you, and pray for Him to bless you all. I know that some of you volunteers may currently be inactive, and I understand it. However, if you wish to get back into the ministry, there are several openings for volunteers at the various pods and in other areas such as mentoring, letter writing, spiritual advisers and the like. We can always use more volunteers, so if you are currently inactive, please consider coming back. We would appreciate it and I know God will bless you for it.

We are currently planning a fund raising banquet for September 29, 2012 to be held at Asbury United Methodist Church, and we would hope that all of you could be in attendance. We could also use some help with the planning and with the details. We have a group who will be catering the event, but they will need some help in the kitchen. They are donating their time so any help you might be able to give would be greatly appreciated.

We have also been making a lot of changes in the ministry, in order to be more efficient and to stick closely to our role of bringing Christ to those who are incarcerated, as well as meeting our fiduciary responsibilities to properly manage our money. God has entrusted us with so much, and we must always remember it is all His, and we are just the stewards of it. If any of you have any suggestions or comments, or for that matter, complaints, please contact us anytime. We really need to hear from you, and we will answer your questions as soon as we can get to them. I always tell those we serve, "Don't tell me what I want to hear, tell me what I need to hear." I can't fix what I don't know is broken.

We have just completed five weeks of training for current and new volunteers who will be going into the Lehigh Valley Prison. It was a very successful training period, where we are hoping to get new volunteers go into the prison. Unfortunately, not all volunteers could get to the training. It is a necessary requirement, from the State Board, that everyone receive training every two years. Hopefully, this October we will be able to have another training session, which will be either one or two days so the rest of the volunteers will be able to finish their training. Then from this time forward, we will be conducting a one to two day training classes every six months, for new volunteers and to keep current volunteers up to date. We want to maintain the highest quality volunteers anywhere, and I believe we have.

One final thing; Wayne Benjamin has resigned as Council Director of Yokefellow Prison Ministry, effective on October 20, 2011. After 28 years he has moved on, and he is no longer affiliated with Yokefellow Prison Ministry in any capacity. Therefore, we are asking that any communications for this ministry would be directed to the person, the phone or the address as shown in this newsletter. It will certainly speed up matters and we will be better able to get you whatever you request in a much more efficient way. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Charles L. Goodge, Council Director

Do You Want to Get Well?

Recently while reading my Bible I came across the passage in John Chapter 5 where Jesus encountered the man at the pool of Bethesda. He had come there hoping to get healed, and as the story goes, when the 'angel of the Lord' stirred up the water, the first person who got into it, would be healed. There were hundreds of people gathered there hoping to get healed, along with this man, who had been paralyzed for thirty-eight years. Jesus knew how long he had been coming there and so He said to him, "Do you want to get well? The man replied, "Sir, when the water is stirred, I don't have anyone to put me in the pool. By the time I get there, somebody else is already in." Jesus told him to take up his bedroll and walk and he did. He was healed immediately.

Now, there are some interesting things about this story; first, Jesus didn't heal anyone else. There were many people there in need of healing but Jesus chose only one to heal at that time. I am sure that many were healed later, but this wasn't the time He chose to heal them. Just this one man was healed. But the part that struck me most was what Jesus said to him, "Do you want to get well?" Why would He ask such a question? Of course he wants to get well. But as I thought more about it, it began to make perfect sense. Some people have become contented to remain in the same state that they have been in, year after year.

How many of us have something that we need to be healed from? Maybe it is an addiction, maybe an attitude, the way we speak to others or our need to be more humble and loving. "Do you want to get well?" I often pray that I want to become more like Jesus, but in reality, 'Do I want to get well?' Am I willing to pay the price? When we speak to the men and women in the prison, we find that most of them have been in and out of prison for years, and I have begun to ask them, "Do you want to get well?" All of them want to get out of prison, but do they really want to get well. I think we all want to get well, but it comes with a price.

As much as these people want to get out of prison, and to stay out of prison, it is very difficult for them. I tell them it is the hardest thing that they will ever have to do. All of a sudden, they have no place to sleep, they have no food and no clothes and they have no way to get around to try and find a job. They need a lot of help. They need a mentor, they need a good church to go to and they need people who care. Some have never had anyone who cared about them. They need a lot of encouragement and they need Jesus in their hearts to strengthen them. Quite possibly, they might just need you.

I would ask that each of you consider where God would lead you, and what you might be able to do to help those who are coming out of the prison system. I am sure they really want to get well, if only someone was there to lend them a hand. Not a hand out, but a helping hand. Prayfully consider where God may use you, and in the process, you may be helping yourself to get well also. Do you want to get well?

Need resources?

**Check the state
Yokefellow website:
www.yokefellowship.org**

**We have a DVD for you to
show at your church to get the
word out for volunteers or
sponsors.**

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

**Review the Yokefellow
Disciplines Manual (under the
Resource tab on the state
website) – it contains a lot of
good information for small
group study.**

**Would you like to see anything
different on our Yokefellow
website: Contact Lisa at
lisamperry6288@yahoo.com
with your suggestions.**

It is a work in progress.

*Jesus said, "Love the Lord your
God with all your heart and with
all your soul and with all your
mind." This is the first and
greatest commandment. And
the second is like it: "Love your
neighbor as yourself."*

Matthew 22:37-39

Gone Home ...



Volunteer Allan C. Palmer, 76, of Salisbury Twp., died on Tuesday, March 6, 2012 in Lehigh Valley Hospital, Salisbury Twp. He was the husband of Doris F. (Schaffer) Palmer. The couple would have celebrated 58 years of marriage in May. Born in Hellertown, he was the son of the late Erwin M. and Mary S. (Reichard) Palmer. He was employed at Mack Trucks for 33 years until retiring and was a school bus driver for the Swain School for 12 years. He was an active member of Bethel Bible Fellowship Church in Emmaus, where he was involved in many church ministries. His life exemplified the love of Christ who was his Lord and Savior.

Survivors: Wife; six daughters, Deborah (Henry) Crush, Sherry (David) Hadinger, Karen (Roger) Diehl, Mary (Thomas) Wilton, Melissa (David) Miller, and Kristina (Daniel) Waterman; brothers, Robert (Linda) and Donald (Cynthia); 38 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren.

Contributions: In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Yokefellow Prison Ministry, P.O. Box 3114 Wescosville PA 18106 or Lehigh Valley Christian High School 330 Howertown Road, Catasauqua, PA 18032.

Allen was a faithful volunteer since 1997 and will surely be missed but we know he went home to be with Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Accept this as your personal invitation to come to the Tuesday Night Out-Prison Timothy Program, 7:30 PM, at Bethany United Methodist Church, 1208 Brookside Road, Wescosville, PA. Bring your Bible, Pray before you come and you may be surprised how God uses you at your first Yokefellow meeting.

Yokefellow "New Life" Support Group

Our group has the desire to reach a more mature relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ. To obtain that goal, we must lay our lives open to the Spirit and fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

Too often we become caught up with the daily routines of life, and put God in the back seat. We need to come together to share our struggles and make room in our hearts to bear each other's burdens, such as issues of abuse, uncontrolled habits, difficulties in relationships or anything that interferes with our spiritual growth.

All of us have struggles, whether past or present. If we don't deal with them, they make everyday tasks seem unbearable. Most struggles are manageable, others may need a great deal of support and encouragement.

As members of the family of God, our Father tells us to gather together in fellowship for support, encouragement, comfort and love.

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Hebrews 10: 24-25

The Yokefellow Formula

Prayer

Study

Discussion

It is these three ingredients that make a Yokefellow meeting unique. Not a Bible study or a worship service, but utilizing the power of prayer, then concentrated study that leads to discussion and allows openness in sharing with one another our ideas, beliefs, hurts, problems, and frustrations, giving the participant the opportunity of getting in touch with himself and learning to know and respect others for what they say, think and feel.

Do you have anything you would like to contribute to the next Newsletter? Please email it to yokefellowpa@yahoo.com.

We are looking for a new title for the Newsletter. Any suggestions?

If you would like to become a Spiritual Advisor, Mentor or Letter Writer, please call 610-820-8469 and leave a message.

Yokefellow Prison Ministry Statement of Faith

We believe in one God, eternal creator and sustainer of Heaven and earth; existing in three persons: The Father, Son and Holy Spirit, co-equal and co-eternal.

We believe in the inspiration and the authority of Scripture.

We believe in the deity of Jesus Christ.

We believe in the virgin birth of Christ.

We believe in the atoning death of Christ.

We believe in the physical resurrection of Christ.

We believe in the personal return of Christ.

We believe in the reality of sin.

We believe in the salvation by faith through spiritual regeneration.

We believe in the power of prayer

We believe in the duty of evangelism.

GET THE WORD OUT ABOUT THE DIRECTED LIFE Re-Entry Program

The Directed Life Program is a Christian faith-based course of intensive instruction offered to a select group of male inmates at Lehigh County Prison and male and female at Work Release. This instruction will teach the inmates life skills that will help them successfully re-enter society upon release from prison. If you have questions about eligibility please contact Council Director Chuck Goodge at 610-820-8469 or yokefellowpa@yahoo.com.

Do You Know Where Yokefellow Volunteers Go?

- Beaver County Prison
- Coal Township SCI
- Dallas SCI
- Greene SCI
- Greensburg SCI
- Huntingdon SCI
- Indiana County Jail
- Lancaster County Prison
- Laurel Highlands SCI
- Montgomery County
- Moundsville SCI
W.Va. (State & County)
- Pine Grove SCI
- Rockview SCI
- Smithfield SCI
- Wheeling, WV
(women & Juv.)

Where volunteers are Needed – meetings vacant or partners needed:

Sunday

3rd, 4th & 5th weeks

7:30 PM - 9:00 PM – male pods

4th & 5th weeks

7:30 PM - 9:00 PM – male pods

Every Monday

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM – female pods

7:30 PM – 9:30 PM – male pods

Every Tuesday

8:30 PM -10:00 PM – male pod

Every Wednesday

8:30 PM - 10:00 PM – male pods

Every Thursday

Work Release @ 8:00 PM –

9:30 PM – male pod

Every Friday

6:30 PM - 8:30 PM – male pod

6:30 PM - 8:30 PM – male pod

8:30 PM - 10:00 PM – male pod

The Wicked Servant

Read Matthew 25: 14-31

In this passage, Jesus talks about a master who gave his servants differing amounts of money and then went off on a long journey. It was referred to as talents. First we must ask, what was a talent? A talent was a unit of measure, usually used to a weight precious metal such as gold or silver, and since the Bible doesn't say exactly what was given, I think it is safe to say, it was a large amount of money. Some have said it was as much as a million dollars, so let's just assume, in this instance that it was a million dollars. This would mean that the master gave one servant five million dollars, another two million dollars and the last one million dollars, with the understanding that they would manage the money wisely and return the profits to him when he returned.

The servant who had five million, earned another five million and he was praised for it; the second one the one that received the two million, earned another two million and he was praised for it. But the last one, the one that he gave one million dollars to did nothing with the money. He did not even invest it to gain something that way, and so he was severely punished.

How does this apply to us? When Jesus spoke, He spoke in parables, which are designed to get us to think about it. Often He spoke about money, because the people could relate to it better that way, but there was always a hidden meaning to the parable. In this case, what if He really was referring to physical talents. It makes perfect sense. God has given to each one of us, many physical talents. Some have the talent to speak, while others have the talent to listen. Some have the talent to lead, while others have the talent to follow. Some have the talent to design and others the talent to build. No matter what you think of yourself, you have a God-given talent, and God expects you to use it.

God never put us on this planet to just grow up, get married, raise a family and then die. Don't get me wrong, these are honorable things to do, but he has so much more for us to do. He calls us to use our talents, not to bury them in the sand. When I talk to the men in the prison, I tell them the same thing. They have talents and gifts from God, and some day He will ask them, "What did you do with the talent that I gave you." God will ask all of us the same thing some day. How would you answer Him?

For years, I said, 'Lord I will do anything that you want me to do', but I was lying. The truth is that I would do anything that God wanted me to do, if it fit my plans. I would do anything that God wanted me to do, if it wasn't too hard. I would do anything that God wanted me to do, if I liked it. Well, that isn't the way God calls us. He calls us to serve Him, when, where and how he wants us to serve. I never wanted to go into the prison to minister to inmates, but that is where God wanted me, and I knew it the first time I went in there. I remember that night when I came home and all I could say is, "I'm hooked." I knew I was where God had called me to be.

Where is God calling you? Believe it or not, God calls **everyone** to service, and I do mean **everyone**. You are called to serve our Lord and Savior; you just have to be willing to do it, no matter where it leads. Don't be the 'wicked servant'