

Yokefellowship
Prison Ministry
Sharing the Good News
Lehigh Valley
Council

The Yoke and The Cross



"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls."



*The Voice of the Yokefellowship
Prison Ministry in the Lehigh Valley*

Yokefellowship Prison Ministry
PO Box 3114 - Wescosville, PA 18106
610-820-8469 - www.yokefellowpa.org
e-mail: yokefellowpa@yahoo.com

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

Council Director
Charles L. Goodge

Spiritual Advisor
Rev. Gary Morrison

Chairperson
Lisa M. Perry

Vice Chairman
Rev. Allen Kline

Treasurer
Vacant

Secretary
Norris G. Lovette

The Director's Chair :

In the book of Revelation it talks about **casting our crowns before the feet of Jesus**, and it made me think of an allegory to better understand what this might be about. Imagine that you had this very dear and precious friend, whom you had been with for years. Perhaps you grew up together, played together and shared so many things with each other. Whenever you had a problem or a difficult situation, he was the first one to come to your aid, and the first one to counsel you. There was nothing that he didn't know about, and in spite of all of your faults, he still loved and cared for you. When you were so sick, he sat with you and talked with you. When your business appeared to be failing, he counseled you, encouraged you and showed you how to make it all work. When you were at the lowest point in your life, when you lost your parents, and even when you lost a child, and it appeared that no one else cared or was willing to reach out to help you, he was always there for you. Over the years, he had become very well-known and famous and very popular, and he had many friends, but he always had time to talk to you whenever you needed him.

Then one day, all of his friends decided to give him a birthday party, and you were invited to the party. It was a grand and glorious time, and everyone was there. There was singing, and laughing as well as so much peace and happiness and joy throughout the place. It was the greatest and most elaborate party that you had ever seen. It reminded you of what Heaven must be like.

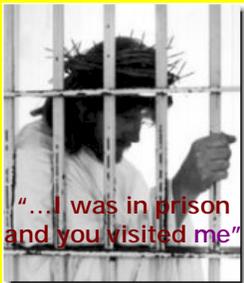
Then at one point in the party, everyone was asked to come forward and present their gifts to their friend, and you suddenly realize that you had failed to bring a gift. After all that this man had been to you, and after all that he had done for you, you have no gift to give to him to say 'thank you'. Can you imagine standing in Heaven, before Jesus and having to say, "I have nothing to give you." You accepted His gifts, His grace, His mercy, His forgiveness, but you never really worked at something to present to Him in return. I once said I wish I could live my life in such a way that I 'deserved' to go to heaven, but we all know that that is impossible. And I know I have wasted a lot of time on frivolous things, that weren't beneficial to anyone, but I am trying to change that. God never asked us to be the greatest at whatever we do, He just asked us to 'do the best you can with what you have'. Even if it is just a 'widow's mite', do the best you can with what you have. Everyone has gifts and talents, and everyone has the capacity for compassion and love. Everyone can do something, and I really believe if you look for it you will find your gift, and if you aren't sure what it is, simply commit 'random acts of kindness'. I can't imagine ever standing before Jesus and saying I had nothing to give Him. I can never give Him enough, but I can try.

The Yokefellowship Prison Ministry is one of many ways we can give our gifts to Jesus. Let's keep up the good work!

Charles L. Goodge



Get Involved



*"...I was in prison
and you visited me"*

*Think about it! It will be a
blessing to you and to others
also.*

Contact Chuck Goodge at
Yokefellowpa@Yahoo.com or 610-
820-8469



Spring 2015 Training

All Yokefellowship volunteers must attend a training event at least every two years.

You will receive an email with training details.

If you do not receive an email please call the Yokefellowship office.

Fund Raising Banquet



Did you miss this blessing?

The Yokefellowship Banquet on Sept. 27th was a wonderful time of celebration and worship! With plenty of good food, the Heart Street Band, Scott Redfield and Bill Kunsman, who blessed us with their beautiful singing and guitar music.

The food, provided by Country Cousins Catering and served by Clarence Kreider and associates, was delicious. Everyone enjoyed the fellowship and encouragement.

We thank all who participated in this vital part of the Yokefellowship Prison Ministry.

Provide a Bible to an Inmate



Bibles are \$6.00 and we are able to put the Word of God into the hands of prisoners who seek to change.

You can give to the Bible Fund By sending a check to the

Bible Fund

Payable to:

Yokefellowship Prison Ministry
PO Box 3114 - Wescosville, PA
18106

What the Bible says about Prison Ministry

"I was in prison and you came to visit me ... I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25:36, 40)

If Jesus were on earth today, would we find Him in the prisons, talking and dining with the most loathed criminals and outcasts? Of course we would. He would be there "to seek and to save the lost!"

Follow Jesus' Footsteps

When Jesus was berated for eating with tax collectors and sinners, he said *"it is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners". (Mark 2:17)*

Tax collectors, such as Zacchaeus, had fallen into their own category of contempt; set apart, it seems from the rest of the sinners. They were loathed as corrupt, treacherous . . . criminal. Yet Jesus went to them, spent time with them, shared a friendly meal with them. He did not overlook what they had done or what they had become. But in the moral "sickness" of their sin, He offered them the healing of His forgiveness, His salvation, and even His friendship.



If Jesus were on earth today, we would find Him in the prisons, talking and dining with the most loathed criminals and outcasts. He would be there "to seek and to save the lost" and to restore them to sonship, just as He did with Zacchaeus. (See Luke 19:1-9)

Follow Jesus' Example

God does not despise the broken; nor should we. Rather, we are to imitate the One who came to seek and to save the lost - as we once were - no matter what type of bonds enslave and cripple them. This is why Prison Fellowship has taken as its logo a bruised reed, based on the promise of Isaiah 42:3, which is affirmed in the life of Jesus.

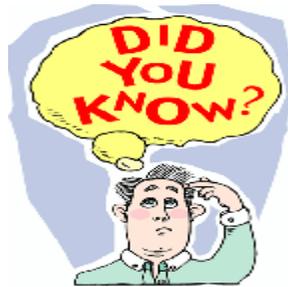
"A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice." (Isaiah 42:3)

Jesus admonishes us to show no partiality to others on the basis of their status in life. All are equally in need of Christ for forgiveness and salvation. All have equal potential to become mighty men and women of faith.

Share Freedom Behind Bars

God seeks to set prisoners free. Not always from their physical prison, but certainly from their imprisonment by sin, ignorance, rebellion, and foolish choices. Jesus identified Himself as the source of this freedom. As this is an important part of God's work, it is an important part of the Church's work as well.

"The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him [Jesus]. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: 'The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.' " (Luke 4:17-19)



A list of employers who hire ex-offenders is available with placement help at:

The **PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley** office located at:
555 Union Boulevard
Allentown, PA 18109

Phone: 610-437-5627
(to reach the front desk press "0")

Remove barriers, be informed

www.CareerLinkLehighValley.org

- SNAP (Food Stamps)
- Child Support
- Parental Rights
- Federal Student Financial Aid
- Cleaning up your Record – Expungement
- Roadblocks to reentry
- ex-offenders job hunting guide
- National reentry resources
- Prisoner reentry guidebook
- D.O.C. National HIRE Network
- Employment Limitations in PA

Employers Info -

Also at Career Link Lehigh Valley employers can find out about:

Federal Bonding Program –

Employers can receive bonding free of charge for ex-offender employees who are (or may be) denied coverage by commercial carrier.

Work Opportunity Tax Credit –

Employers save money on their federal income taxes through the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) program by hiring ex-offenders.

Society may intend prison to be a place of punishment, but God can use it as a place of refinement and transformation. He does not give up on those in prison, but pursues them in love.

Hitting rock bottom is what prods many offenders to take an honest look at their lives and cry out to God for mercy. And God is ready to give it.

“Some sat in darkness and the deepest gloom, prisoners suffering in iron chains, for they had rebelled against the words of God and despised the counsel of the Most High. So he subjected them to bitter labor; they stumbled, and there was no one to help. Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He brought them out of darkness and the deepest gloom and broke away their chains. Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men, for he breaks down gates of bronze and cuts through bars of iron.” (Psalm 107:10-16)

Transformed lives point everyone’s attention to God! This is the greatest motivation to get involved in prison ministry. No one else can take credit for the miraculous turn-around in criminals’ lives.

“Listen to my cry, for I am in desperate need; rescue me from those who pursue me, for they are too strong for me. Set me free from my prison, that I may praise your name. Then the righteous will gather about me because of your goodness to me.” (Psalm 142:6-8)

Remember No One is Beyond God’s Reach

A person’s past does not have to dictate his future. Even a former criminal, if he has learned from his mistakes and renounced his sins, can become a great leader in God’s hands. Consider the apostle Paul, a former religious zealot who had burned in his hatred for Christians and conspired in putting them to death for their faith. Yet Jesus called Paul to Himself, directed him to write most of the New Testament, and turned him into the early Church’s greatest missionary to the Gentiles.

Welcome Your Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Despite their past, offenders who come to Christ have a new identity and a new relationship to the Church! We are to receive them as family, our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Paul is writing to a slave-owner about one of his runaway slaves, Onesimus.] “I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me ... Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back for good — no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord.” Philemon 10-11, 15-16

Excerpts from www.prisonfellowship.org



Find Freedom in Christ. He is the Way, The Truth and The Life. You will find rest, love and healing for your soul.



Meet our Board members

Next Board meeting is 11/20/2014 (general operations discussed)

Annual Meeting is 12/18/2014 (Officers elected - budget approved)

Meeting time 7:00 PM at Chuck's 2043 West Union St. Allentown, PA

Jesus in Prison A Work Shop

on prison reform and re-entry support will be presented by the Lehigh Conference of Churches

Saturday, November 8, 2014 , 8:30am - 3:30pm

St. John's UCC, 6th & Walnut Streets, Allentown, PA

Continental breakfast and lunch are included - (suggested donation: \$10)

610-433-6421

Don't forget GoodWill Industries

You may qualify for job training at GoodWill thru the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) for those impaired by addiction or other impairments. Jobs and more information are also listed on their website:

www.Yourgoodwill.org

I stayed up all night thinking about how to arrange this newsletter, and finally it dawned on me...

The Editor

We have a new website!



www.yokefellowpa.org

The Yokefellowship website has been designed to assist the volunteer and the ex-offender by providing a wealth of helpful information as reviewed below:

About: Find information about the history of the Yokefellowship Prison Ministry, its leadership and our Statement of Faith.

Mission Programs: This section describes the missions programs that Yokefellowship can present for your church.

Out-Prison/After Care: Find Out-Prison Ministry and Aftercare services. Out-prison meets on Tuesday from 7:30 to 9:00 PM at 2043 W. Union Street, Allentown, PA.

Prison Links: Find a schedule of Yokefellowship prison meetings.

Events: Find a schedule of Yokefellowship upcoming events.

Yoke and Cross Newsletters: Find *PDF copies for each edition of the Yoke and Cross Newsletter. (*PDF is an Adobe Reader format opened by most PC's)

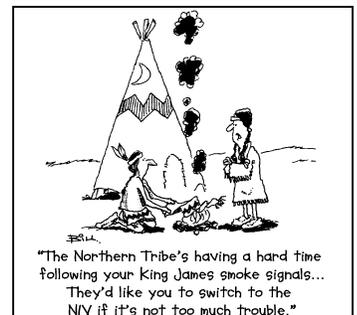
Daily Devotionals: Find links to respected pastors' devotionals, such as Alistair Begg, Oswald Chambers, Billy Graham, Chip Ingram, David Jeremiah, John MacArthur, Joyce Meyers, Charles Stanley, Chuck Swindoll and Ravi Zacharias.

Local Churches: Find a list of churches where our volunteers attend. Call our office and our volunteer will meet you at the church. Click on the church name to be redirected to their website if they have one.

Community Resources: Find a *PDF copy of *The Community Resource Book* published by *Head Start/Early Head Start of the Lehigh Valley*. This book lists the descriptions, addresses and phone numbers for hundreds of resources able to provide help for re-entry to the community.

Get Involved: Find a contact form for questions about volunteering and information about how to get involved as a Yokefellowship volunteer.

As we continue to build the website, we will list other helpful information for both prisoners and volunteers.



"The Northern Tribe's having a hard time following your King James smoke signals... They'd like you to switch to the NIV if it's not too much trouble."