

*The Voice of the
Yokefellowship
Sharing the Good News
Prison Ministry
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."

Winter
2015 Edition

Our Mission
To help at-risk youths, inmates and ex-offenders yoke themselves to Christ for salvation and changed lives.

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

Chairman
Rev. Allen Kline

Vice Chairman
Vacant

Treasurer
Ilda Perna

Secretary/Editor
Norris Lovette

The Director's Chair :

Happy New Year to all of you, and may the love of Christ be with you throughout this year and many years to come. I suppose some have made New Year's resolutions, but I have never made any, and I am not about to start at this point. But the new year is a good time to reflect on the past year, and hopefully find areas of blessing and areas of needed improvement. Last year was no exception. In all of the pods that we go into, attendance has been good, and lives are changing.

Currently we have Bible studies at seven (7) different times every week in Lehigh County Jail, with an average of 10 inmates per meeting. Since the average stay at LCJ is just 77 days our classes are constantly changing, and our time is limited as to how much we can help them. We have three (3) or four (4) volunteers who go in as spiritual advisers to talk to the men and women, one-on-one, to mentor them to a Godly life. We have distributed over 450 bibles to the inmates over the past couple of years, with a constant demand for more. We order them from Amazon, usually at less than \$5 each so we can keep the cost down. We distribute 200 copies of Our Daily Bread devotionals every quarter. These are sent to us without charge, but we do make an annual donation to cover their costs.

Our lessons come from Prison Fellowship Ministries which was founded by Chuck Colson, and teach Jesus Christ to them from the perspective of someone who was also an inmate at one time, and can relate to their situation. We were able to purchase and distribute many gifts to the children of inmates at Christmas time, because of the generous contributions of our supporters. Just to see the inmates tearing-up knowing that their kids got a gift from them is so rewarding.

Smile, Jesus Loves you and sets the prisoner free!

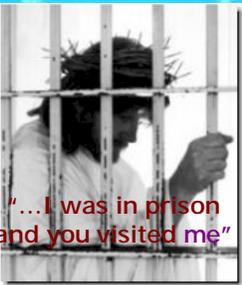
We go in and sing with them, watch movies with them and talk to them about Jesus. But what we do the best, is to let them know that we care. Rare is the family who has not had a family member, friend or relative who hasn't made some bad choices and wound up in trouble with the law. Sure there are some people in jail who need to be there, but the vast majority of them are just like us. They made bad choices and they need a friend who cares, they need someone to guide them and they need a Savior to forgive them.

We thank you all for helping us, and we pray you will continue, and we pray that God will bless you as never before. Happy and a very Blessed New Year to you all. In service to Christ Jesus.

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

610-820-8469



Spring 2015 Training

Get valuable training about prison ministry "do's and don'ts". Meet our Regional Area Director, Alma Maldonado-Colon and learn more about the overall YPM plan.

You will receive an e-mail with training details.

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

Give 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

Membership Renewal

It's time to renew your Yokefellowship Annual membership!

You can become a member or renew your membership in the Yokefellowship Prison Ministry Lehigh Valley Council by filling out the membership card located at the end of this newsletter and sending it along with the \$10.00 dues payment to the Yokefellowship Lehigh Valley Area Council office.



Welcome Our New Chairman !

"Because He lives I can face tomorrow;" What hope this gives as we face uncertain futures and I am in the midst of one uncertain future. As newly elected Chairman of Yokefellowship Prison Ministry Lehigh Valley Area Council, I know that the only way I can do this is "because He lives" in me.

My name is Allen Kline, a retired Evangelical Congregational pastor, having served in the pulpits of the E. C. church for 44 years. I became involved with Yokefellow in 1987 and accompanied Wayne Benjamin on some trips to Williamsport to meet with Yokefellowship leaders up there. I am married and have four adult children: Jeffrey is a Federal Air Marshall flying around the world to protect the U. S.; Jonathan is a PA State Trooper, stationed at Troop H and is a Corporal; Christopher is the co-owner of Jaboa Enterprises in Emmaus, and Stephanie is a registered nurse employed by St. Luke's Fountain Hill. Judy my wife is a RN and works at Phoebe in Allentown.

I have ministered in prison as a one-on-one spiritual counselor and have also gone in for services at Lehigh County prison. I have been on the Board of Directors for about 4 years and have recently been elected, at the Annual Business Meeting, as Chairman. I follow in the footsteps of Lisa Perry who did an excellent job the years she had this position. One of the major accomplishments under Lisa's leadership was the revising of the By-Laws for the Lehigh Valley Council. I thank Lisa for her years of leadership. In those By-Laws the membership of the Council is spelled out as one who accepts the theological position of Yokefellowship, one who receives four (4) hours of training at lease every two years; one who ministers in prison or in some capacity in the Council, and one who pays the Annual Dues.

Because He lives I can face tomorrow !

You will find a form in this Newsletter to apply for or renew your membership in the Lehigh Valley Yokefellowship Prison Ministry. We are committed to "help at-risk youth, inmates and ex-offenders yoke themselves to Christ for salvation and changed lives." This is the mission of Yokefellowship Prison Ministry and you will see our mission statement many times in the future.

We now have a new Treasurer, Ms. Ilda Perna, who has the accounting knowledge and skills to handle the finances of the Council. Ilda will be a great help to the LVAC Board in the preparation of our Annual Budget, which for 2015 is around \$15,000.00. We are so blessed to have such a qualified person to serve in this vital capacity!

Back in September of 2014 a quartet introduced a new song titled; "Your Walk Talks." The lyrics contain the thought, "your walk talks louder than your talk talks!" In 1 John 4, the Apostle says something similar. He states that if we say we love God and hate our brother we are a liar. In our ministry we are to show God's love to all people, in or out of prison. and if we don't it is then evident that we don't love God. I believe our members love God and show it by their "walk" as they go into the prison each week. I pray that God will bless and use you to His glory as we "help at-risk youth, inmates and ex-offenders yoke themselves to Christ for salvation and changed lives."

AMEN.

Allen Kline,
Chairman

Lisa, we love you and thank you Sooo much for your leadership as past Chairwoman and your excellent work on our Newsletters, Website, Administration and so many other areas! The LVAC Board of Directors

What is Shalom?

Shalom is the Hebrew word for peace, but Shalom means more than just peace. Shalom is a completeness, a wholeness, and not only the absence of strife, but a peace deep within the heart. It is the welfare of a person, it is health, tranquility and prosperity, 'Shalom' is the gift God gives to those who belong to Him, that's why we don't have to be afraid, that's why we can always have Peace, his gift that He does not take away from us!

Let's ask that question again, what is Shalom? Shalom is completeness, wholeness, peace, welfare, health, tranquility, prosperity, perfectness, fullness, rest. God saw that His creation was complete, it was good and there was peace in all His creation, this peace, a completeness, a fullness, perfection!

Genesis 1:31 ~ "God saw everything that He had made, and it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day." As image bearer of God, we are created to be at peace within ourselves, this is His good and perfect gift given to us, to be in harmony and at peace with Him and one another.

The Evil One is relentless in his attempts to steal and destroy everything God has provided for us in and through Jesus Christ. God's peace is His special gift to His children and Satan works extra hard to prevent us from enjoying it. In our broken world, Satan tries to turn God's intended peace within us upside down and inside out. He will try to deceive us to obtain a false sense of peace through drugs, alcohol, sex, food binging, relentlessly at work (workaholic), and other activities of excess, which results in distorting the way we should be. These things were originally intended for our use in moderation and to be enjoyed, but were never intended to be the source of our life's satisfaction. We cannot create shalom (peace) for ourselves or others through actions or addictions. We should also stop trying to achieve a feeling of goodness in and through things, money, pleasures or people, but accept the pure and simple goodness that the peace of God brings into our lives everyday.

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid"
"John 14:27(NIV)

Remember that we have peace – Jesus provided it, we must take it and use it. The Word of God states that our responsibility is to believe in Him, to trust Him completely – not to solve our problems in ways of our own. We believe, we have faith in Him, and He is constantly working on our behalf to meet our needs.

The Lord is the only one who can bring about shalom-peace in our lives, to the one who seeks after Him through prayers, and the study of His word, through meditation on His Word and through fellowship with His children.

'Shalom' We don't need to have fear, rather, we can always have Peace, the peace that God gives us!

Question is: Are we truly willing to surrender everything within our hearts and lives, and walk in obedience to Him, trusting Him daily?

Prayer: Abba Father, my Lord and my God, my Savior, my Shepherd, I am afraid and tired of carrying all life burdens myself. I surrender all, and ask you to take charge of my life. I trust you Lord, with my words, actions and especially with the rest your peace gives me. You are all that I need. Take charge of my life and lead me forever more ! In Jesus name I pray, Amen!

May the Lord bless us all with a double portion of His peace!

Pastor Gary Morrison
Spiritual Advisor

Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; Ps. 37:7



Welcome our new Volunteers !

We have been blessed with four new members who are excited about being involved in the LVAC Prison Ministry.

- **Emily Goldberg**, from Hillsong Church in New York city, is a student at Molenberg College, Allentown. Emily has volunteered to go into the prison and is now ministering in the women's Bible study at Lehigh County Jail.
- **Steven Schaefer**, from Messianic Jewish Congregation, Beit Simcha, Lehigh Valley, comes to us from Schnecksville, PA. Steve has been ministering to the men at the Northampton Work Release facility in Bethlehem, PA. He is also looking forward to ministering at Lehigh County Jail.
- **Hui Jun Hong (Jess)**, from the Chinese congregation at the Trinity Baptist Church, Allentown, comes to us from Lehigh, PA. Jess is now ministering in the women's Bible Study at Lehigh County Jail.
- **Ilda Perna**, from Life Church Allentown, comes to us from Easton, PA. Ilda has accepted the office of Treasurer on the LVAC Board of Directors. She is looking forward to helping the Board with the council finances and budget. She is also currently going into the Lehigh County Jail to minister to the women with Life Church.

**Serve the
Lord with
Gladness!**

Prisoner Feedback

While ministering at Lehigh County Jail and the Northampton County Work Release we sometimes hear comments like these from prisoners:

"Thank you so much for coming, we really look forward to this time of encouragement"

" Being here is the best thing for me because I would have been dead if I had continued on the path I was on!"

"Hey, we missed you last week!"

"After coming to the Yokefellowship meetings I began to see that Jesus Christ can change my life, and I now have hope."

" I don't read too good and never would have looked at a Bible, but now I see how God speaks to me in the Bible and I want to know more."

"I had a wife and kids, car, house, a good job, and now I have lost everything. My wife hates me, I can't help my family, my relatives hate me. Thank God you come here to encourage me and to give me hope! Please don't stop coming!"

Comments from a letter we recently received from an inmate:

"I want to thank you for being a positive influence at the lowest point in my life...The times in our fellowship when you prayed for me have been such a

tremendous help...I pray that He lets me around other Christian brothers, for I have no one; nothing but my Bible to keep me in Christ. The time I will be incarcerated keeps getting longer and longer. I don't understand God's purpose. There is a chance I may go to state prison. I don't want to go. I want to right my wrongs. I want to get better. Dispite not knowing why God has put me where I am, I am confident that God has a better plan for me...Thank you for becoming a part of my life during this time. I look up to you as a teacher and a man of God. When I'm free I want to help others, teaching the Word of God. Please don't stop the good work you are doing..."

One can see from this letter that it is a great privilege to minister in Jesus name to men and women like this. Even though being confused about all that is happening to him he has gained a confidence in God and in this ministry. He wants to change and needs someone to help him with that process. The fact that some prisoners like this have such respect and gratitude for the work that we are doing should encourage us to continue and to strive to be good examples of the power of Christ in our lives. They need our prayers and our direction in understanding God's Word and putting it into practice.

Renewing Your LVAC Membership Or to Apply for Membership

To Renew Your Membership: Fill out the form below and mail it along with your dues to the address shown.

To Apply for Membership: Fill out the form below and mail it to the address shown. New applicants are not required to include dues. Or, you may call 610-820-8469 to apply for membership or for more information.

LVAC MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION

I DESIRE TO BE A MEMBER OF YOKEFELLOWSHIP PRISON MINISTRY **LEHIGH VALLEY AREA COUNCIL**. I AM FAMILIAR WITH THE YPM STATEMENT OF FAITH AND AFFIRM IT.

Name (please print) _____

ADDRESS _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Contact Phone # _____

- I have enclosed the \$10.00 Annual Membership fee- **current members only**.
- I had my last Yokefellowship training in _____ (year) -**current members only**.
- I have never had training and desire to know when the next training is scheduled.

Signed _____

Please forward this application with the dues to:

Yokefellowship Prison Ministry
PO Box 3114
Wescosville, PA 18106

OFFICE USE ONLY

Rec ___/___/___

Rep ___/___/___

Membership Requirements

A member of the Yokefellowship Prison Ministry Lehigh Valley Area Council must meet the following requirements:

- Accept the Yokefellowship Prison Ministry Statement of Faith (See www.yokefellowpa.org).
- Be at least 18 years of age.
- Be actively involved in the Yokefellowship ministry in some way.
- Pay the required annual dues.
- Attend a Yokefellowship training event at least every two years.

LVAC Annual Membership Meeting

As a member of the LVAC you have the responsibility of voting at the Annual Membership Meeting in December. This meeting is held for the membership to direct the YPMLVAC ministry by having a voice and voting on the following:

- The election of Officers for the Board of Directors
- Changes to the LVAC By-Laws
- Setting the annual dues and adopting a budget
- Approving a faith-based pledge to the YPM state office

