

Yokefellowship
Prison Ministry

Lehigh Valley
Council

The Yoke and the Cross



FEBRUARY 2014

-

APRIL 2014

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

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

Council Pastoral Advisor
Pastor Gary Morrison

Council Chairperson
Lisa M. Perry

Vice Chairman
Rev. Allen Kline

Treasurer
Vacant

Secretary
Scott Redfield

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Dues information has been sent out. If you have not received the information please contact us.

Spring 2014 Training

Dates and facilitators to be announced.

An email will be sent out to volunteers. Training is open to the public. If you are interested please contact us.

The Director's Chair: Greetings to you all in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is my sincerest hope and prayer that you are all well, and that you are able to stay warm and comfortable this winter. The snow is so beautiful, as long as you have heat in your house, you don't have to drive in it and especially you don't have to shovel it. Besides, just think how much more we will be able to appreciate the spring this year.

First I would like to tell all of you who have been asking about Wayne Benjamin, that he has moved to Bensalem, and is staying with his son Larry and his wife Gayle. They prepared an apartment for him in the basement, and so he is doing very well. His address is 2445 New Market Sq. S, Bensalem, PA 19020.

We are currently trying to set-up a training session which we hope to do sometime in April or May. It will be here very soon, so once we can put a date together, we will be letting you know. Anyone who is a volunteer going into the prison, remember, you must have training at least every two years, so that you will be authorized by the state Yokefellowship. If anyone is interested in going into the prison, you are welcome to attend our training sessions and/or you may also go in as a guest to help you to decide if prison ministry is for you.

We have mailed out all of the income-tax receipts to those of you who have contributed to this ministry. If for some reason, you didn't receive yours, or if yours is incorrect, please let me know as soon as possible, and we will correct it immediately. We appreciate every one of you, and I know God will bless you for your faithfulness. Thanks again.

Finally, we ask for your prayers, for this ministry and also for the men and women who are incarcerated and those previously incarcerated. For the most part, they have made some bad choices and they need prayers, mentors and church families to help them to readjust to society. Remember them. Like us, they are God's children too.

Charles L. Goodge

Understanding the times.

I was reading through Scripture a while back when a phrase jumped out at me, and a day or two later it jumped out again, so I felt I should take notice. In 1 Chronicles 12:32, I read, "Men of Israel who understood the times & knew what Israel should do. In Esther 1:13 "he spoke with the wise men who understood the times."

In the book of Esther, King Xerxes has a mini-crises on his hand, his wife Queen Vashti, had refused his summons. To be fair to her, it could have been no fun to have to parade for her husband's guests so that they too could admire her physical beauty. The mini-crises was no minor crises. It threatened to spread rebellion into all the households of the Persian Empire. The women of the Empire could all begin to refuse to obey their husbands; something had to be done. No Empire could or would tolerate any kind of rebellion from its conquered subjects, much less rebellion within the houses and homes of the citizens of that empire.

The wisest advice, from the most trusted sources within the king's circles came from "men who understood the times" men who knew what the right course of action should be. Men who would ensure the King acted to preserve the dignity of his own reign, preserve the authority of his own home, and maintain the status quo of the era. Men whose advice would be, essentially in the best interests of the country which they lived in. This advice led to Queen Vashti's permanent exclusion from her husband's presences, and in addition she also lost her Royal Position. Another was chosen to replace her.

In 1 Chronicles, David is on the run from Saul. He has been anointed King by Samuel, but was not yet recognized as such by the existing King and people of Israel. To cut a long story short, there were many disaffected people within the Kingdom, who had joined up with David, many I am sure for all the wrong reasons, but people rallied to him. From the Tribe of Issachar, there were men who "understood the times" they were sensitive to the way the Lord was directing the nation, they were savvy to the political situation. They were astute men who could "read the writing on the wall". They also knew what the Nation of Israel should be doing, unhitching themselves from Saul, and hitching themselves to the future King.

Brothers and sisters, our King has granted us permanent and guaranteed access to his presence at any time. We need have no fear of losing our position, or our privilege; the Holy Spirit within us leads us all to become a people who understand the times. We can see the writing on the wall, because we have the Word of God given to us, and we have understanding of the Word, through His Holy Spirit, and through the preaching and teaching of His Word. We recognize despite living in a country with political system that is obsolete, not because democracy will fail as surely as any other political system will fail. Democracy is and was superior to communism, totalitarianism, dictatorship, etc., but it is still flawed.

If we understand the times, we understand that we have citizenship in a heavenly kingdom. We have the King of Kings, who can and will never fail us in any way. This year we need to look to Jesus more than ever before. It is better for us to hide in the caves with Jesus, to wander in the deserts with Jesus, to be persecuted with Jesus, to be rejected by the majority of the world as was Jesus, and not to ally ourselves with the fickleness of changing "value" systems, which is as bad idea as Vashti's attempt at rebellion.

Pastor Gary Morrison

If you would like a group to come to your church to speak about Yokefellowship Prison Ministry, whether to a large group, or to your Sunday School class, 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** at, 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. Inmates, volunteers and their families are welcome.

**BEGINNING ON
MARCH 4, 2014, THE
TIMOTHY PROGRAM
WILL BE HELD AT:**

**519 N. LUMBER ST.
ALLENTOWN, PA
18102**

***... May this house
be a house of prayer
for all nations.
Isaiah 56:7***

**CHRISTMAS FOR
CHILDREN OF INMATES**

Thank you to those individuals who contributed to the gifts for the inmates' children. It was another success. Gifts were delivered in the Lehigh Valley area and the children were very excited.

I Could Have Done Better

Way back, when I was in my early thirties, seemingly for no reason, I began to get nosebleeds. Now this probably seems like nothing to worry about but, being a man, it was a concern to me. I could be sitting calmly watching television and all of a sudden my nose would begin to bleed. I mentioned it to my wife who didn't think it was particularly serious, but I told her that I had never gotten nosebleeds before, so something had changed. So, probably just to appease me, she told me that the next time I got one to let her know, and she would take my blood pressure. It wasn't long before it happened again, and when she took my blood pressure she found that it was very high. The following day I was at the doctor's office and he concurred, and I began taking blood pressure medicine. It was the first time that I had experienced anything that had the potential of becoming very serious and I wanted God to heal me of this problem right away. But I also realized that I had to take some responsibility too. Before I ask God to remove a problem, or to heal me, I must do my part, whatever that is, to try and correct it.

At that time I was working with someone who was an avid runner; long distance runner, and since I knew that being physically fit is a good way to lower blood pressure, I began running also. I was surprised to learn that it was much easier than I had thought it would be, and I began to enjoy running. First a mile, then three, then six, all of which promoted my confidence. Soon I began to consider running in a race, and since I don't usually think things through, I decided to run a ten mile race, and I did.

Since running doesn't require a lot of concentration, it gives you time to think and to reflect on things. Running races, not so much. It can get you to have little conversations in your head, as you race along, especially as the pain increases, in a long race. You hear things like, "Why am I doing this?", or, "If I just stop, the pain will stop". But you don't stop because now your competitive nature takes over and you keep pushing yourself and saying "Just keep putting one foot in front of the other, one foot in front of the other." Finally, after what seemed forever, or at least a hundred miles, I saw the finish line and I realized that I was actually going to make it. Once I crossed the finish line, gasping for breath and thinking that each breath might be my last, the conversations continued. "I am never ever, ever going to do this again, ever!!"

However, within ten or fifteen minutes, I began to believe that I was going to survive, and in fact I started feeling pretty good; invigorated from the recent exercise. And then of all things, I began to look at some of the brochures of future races, and at which ones I might run in; and yes I did run in other races. I even ran in a marathon and finished it. For those not familiar with a marathon, a marathon is a race of 26 miles 385 yards, and it was the longest 3 hours 42 minutes and 44 seconds I ever experienced. And like every other race after I sufficiently recovered, I was thinking to myself, "I could have done better." I did try to run another marathon, but a 24 hour bug hit me a couple

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 inmates. Current prices for Bibles are: \$6.00. 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.

* * * * *

How can I learn what God wants me to do with my life?

First, read Psalm 23:2-3, 25:5, 43:3, 119:105, 139:24, and 143:10. Trust that God will not let you down because once He closes one door He opens another.

Second, read Jeremiah 29:11-14. Listen

Third, James 1:5-6 ask God for wisdom and He will give it to us.

Finally, read 1 Corinthians 16:9. "The door to opportunity swings on the hinges of opposition." God will make a path for us through the wilderness. Read Proverbs 3:5-6.

*Make me to know your ways,
O LORD;
teach me your paths.
Lead me in your truth, and
teach me,
for you are the God of my
salvation;
for you I wait all day
long.* Psalm 25:4-5

I Could Have Done Better (cont.)

of days before the race and I wound out dropping out, because of it. But I still felt I could have done better.

All of this leads me to think about my walk with the Lord, and when I get to the end of life's race here on earth, am I going to think, "I could have done better." I am sure I will, because I know there were times when I could have done better. I got lazy, or distracted, or involved in something else. I could have done better. Life is like running a race, when you finish the race and look back at it, in spite of all the pain and agony we suffered, we often think, "I could have done better." I just hope and pray that I never hear Jesus say to me, "You know, you could have done better." With that thought in mind, I know I must work harder, with whatever time God gives me, to do the best I can to serve Him, and to make every effort to do better. To serve the Lord with all my heart, and even though I know I can't make up for lost time, I can do better. We have all been give gifts from God, which He wants us to use in our service to Him. I believe that someday He will ask us what we did with the gifts that He gave us. Did we use them to the best of our ability, or could we have done better? We all must, at times, do a self-evaluation of what we are doing for the Lord, and determine if there is an area, where we could do better. God gave us Jesus, the best he had, and we owe it to Him to give our best to Him. Can we all just try to do a little better? I know that you will feel better, and God will bless you through all eternity.

Quote of the day:

People are often unreasonable and self-centered;
forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of ulterior motives;
be kind anyway.

If you are honest, people may cheat you;
be honest anyway.

If you find happiness, people may be jealous;
be happy anyway.

The good you do today may be forgotten tomorrow;
do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have and it may never be enough;
give your best anyway.

For you see in the end, it is between you and God.
It was never between you and them, anyway.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Jeremiah 29:11

Meeting Specific Needs

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

James 5:13-18

When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:11-13