

**The Voice of the
Yokefellowship**

**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.”



**Fall
2017 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

Lisa M. Perry

Spiritual Advisor

Rev. Gary Morrison

Chairman

Rev. Jesus Ramirez

Vice Chairman

Rev. Gary Morrison

Treasurer

Jess Hong

Secretary/Editor

Norris Lovette

Don't Forget!

Annual Membership Meeting

Date: December 21st 2017

Time: 7:00 PM

Place: Trinity Baptist Church,
689 S. Hillview Road,
Allentown, PA

All Yokefellowship members are required to vote at the Annual Membership Meeting.

Your vote is important to the Lehigh Valley Area Council as they go forward. God directs the ministry through its members input and vote.

PLEASE PLAN TO ATTEND THIS IMPORTANT MEETING!

Director's Corner

As we near the close of 2017 it is a time to reflect on the goals we set in the beginning of the year and see if they came to fruition. In answer to our prayers, God sent us several new volunteers who are now using their gifts to bring the light of Christ to those lost and forgotten folks in prison. Lives are being changed and inmates are reading the Bible and hearing the Gospel, many for the first time. We presented several valuable training sessions where our new volunteers received initial training and orientation and where veteran volunteers received recertification training.

We also addressed one of the most critical needs of the returning citizen, which is JOBS! To that end we held our first Job Fair. More and more returning citizens are calling for job referrals and the Job Fair provided a way for them to meet with several background friendly local employers. They received help preparing resumes, housing information, and prayer and encouragement. Employers, attendees and volunteers were very enthusiastically supportive of this successful event. Next year we hope to improve and expand the Job Fair event. We are also in the process of updating our website to make it easier to navigate, and are adding more helpful resources for both returning citizens and volunteers. I welcome you all to check it out at www.yokefellowpa.org.

My prayer for everyone is the Lord bless your holidays, and in the upcoming year He will grant you good health and meet all your needs. As always I invite you to step out and use the gifts God has given you to serve Him in the Lehigh Valley Yokefellowship Area Council. I know that your heart will be blessed as you experience the joy of leading inmates to Christ and helping returning citizens rebuild their lives. And last, but not least, Thank You to all the faithful volunteers and supporters without which Yokefellowship could not exist.

*Working for Him Always,
Lisa M. Perry*

Attention: Prayer Warriors !

Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” Mt. 9:37-38

Prison is a dark place but Jesus tells us there is much fruit waiting.

The fruit is ready for harvest today!

Workers are needed to gather the fruit before it spoils.

Ask God to send workers to this ministry. We are ready to train them and put their gifts to work in the Lehigh Valley. Is God calling you?

Yokefellowship 2017 Annual Conference



We had a great time of training and fellowship at the Yokefellowship 2017 Annual Conference on October 6th and 7th at the Country Cupboard Inn in Lewisburg, PA . The theme was "The Why and How of Prison Ministry" Hope to see you there next year!



We will be delivering a Bible and gifts to inmates' families again this Christmas!

You can help by sending funds and new Bibles to the Lehigh Valley Council Office at the above address by December 4, 2017

An email will be sent out to volunteers with directions for taking names for inmates' children the week of December 4-8, please be prompt.

Attention Background Friendly Employers!

Post your "background friendly" job openings in the Lehigh Valley on our Yokefellowship Prison Ministry website at www.yokefellowpa.org. Call our office for more information.

Yokefellowship Prison Ministry Brings Christ to Those in Jail !

239 volunteers in 15 Area Councils ministered in 39 correctional and 6 aftercare facilities. Over 1300 inmates and returning citizens were ministered to weekly.

Based on Area Council 2016 4th quarter reports. www.yokefellowship.net

Find Purpose and Fulfillment in Yokefellowship Prison Ministry!

Become a trained Yokefellowship volunteer and join a team to visit the Lehigh County Jail or Community Corrections Center and minister to incarcerated men and women who are hungry for the hope that is found in Jesus Christ! Let us help you use your gifts to find fulfillment in a vital ministry right here in the Lehigh Valley !

The Arrows → indicate where volunteers are needed.

Meetings at the Lehigh County Jail:

- • 3rd, 4th & 5th Sundays 7:30-9:00 PM, 2B / 2C.
- • Every Monday 7:00 - 9:00 PM, men's units 2A / 2D.
- • Every Tuesday 8:30 - 10:00 PM, men's units 4A / 4B.
- • Every Wednesday 6:30 - 8:30 PM, women's unit.
- • Every Wednesday 8:30 - 10:00 PM, men's units 2B / 2C.
- • Every Thursday 7:30 - 9:00 PM, women's unit.
- • Every Friday 7:00 - 9:00 PM, men's units 3A / 3D
- • Every Friday 7:00 - 9:00 PM, men's unit 3B.
- • Every Friday 8:30-10:00 PM, men's units 1A / 4A / 4B.

Could one of these times work for me?

Meetings at the Community Corrections Center

- Every Thursday from 8:00 - 9:30 PM
- Every Friday from 8:00 - 9:30 PM
- Every Sunday from 2:00 - 4:00 PM

Located at 1600 Riverside Drive, Bethlehem, PA 18016

See our website at www.yokefellowpa.org for more information

Let us help you serve the Lord with gladness!

Volunteer Training is Provided!

Need Help plugging in? Yokefellowship is here for you!

I was in prison and you visited me...PTL!

Yokefellowship brought my heart back to the right place, seeking hope through Christ Jesus.

I am eternally grateful. D.B.

Find Joy in serving!



"...I was in prison and you visited

Find out how to become a Yokefellow Volunteer!

Contact Lisa M. Perry at

Yokefellowpa@yahoo.com

610-820-8469

Christmas Cards



You Can provide Christmas cards

for us to hand out in jail. Please drop cards off at the office by Dec. 15th Please call the office about special rules as to what the jails can accept.

Please Note

No glitter, stickers, electronic voice cards or pop-ups. Just plain, white, unsealed envelopes please. You may write a note of encouragement on each card. Just cards please.

It is such an encouragement to those in prison to know someone is thinking of them. They enjoy reading and sharing these cards with each other. Thank You

Help for Returning Citizens and Employers

Over 640,000 people are released from prison each year, according to the U.S. Bureau of Justice. About 75% of these returning citizens are still unemployed a year after being released, according to the National Reentry Resource Center.

"The job market has improved, and employers who are having a hard time finding employees are willing to look at people they may not have just five years ago." Said Bill Bartle, strategic initiatives director at the Lehigh Valley Workforce Investment Board. The P.A. Department of Corrections (DOC) last year launched the Career Pathways Program to train prisoners in skills that are in demand in specific regions of the state. They see employment as the best way to fight recidivism. Some inmates from the Lehigh Valley are being trained in expertise needed in the warehouse industry that has exploded along the I 78 corridor. The program builds on the inmates acquired "soft skills" that employees who have never been to prison might lack, such as keeping to a schedule. They've been held to standards that people on the outside may not have been.

"Everybody needs a second chance, and for the right individual we provide that."

Nazareth Pallet Co.

Recent developments have helped some returning citizens to at least get an interview with a potential employer. Big companies such as Wal-Mart have taken criminal history questions off their employment applications, running background checks only after a conditional offer of employment has been made. Many municipalities, including Allentown, have instituted "ban the box" policies removing from job applications the box applicants had to check if they had a felony or misdemeanor conviction.

(Excerpts taken from the Morning Call, October 22, 2017)

Federal Bonding Program and Employer Tax Credits

Companies that hire returning citizens may be eligible for up to \$2,400 in federal work opportunity tax credits for each worker. In addition, The Federal Bonding Program (www.bonds4jobs.com) offers an insurance policy to protect employers against possible losses incurred due to actions by high-risk employees. The program, which is free to both employee and employer, covers new hires for up to six months. The bonds issued by the FBP guarantee the job honesty of job seekers to employers who want to hire them. Employers receive the bonds – starting at \$5000.00 value – free-of-charge as an incentive to hire these applicants; coverage is for the first six months of a selected individual's term of employment. The FBP bond insurance was designed to reimburse the employer for any loss due to employee theft of money or property.

Two returning citizens – John and Sidney – who were hired by an HVAC company and have proven to be stellar employees..

FBP website

The FBP Has Achieved a 99% Success Rate. Since its inception bonds have been activated only one percent of the time. The truth is that the Federal Bonding Program has introduced many talented, dedicated and passionate employees to their employers, enabling returning citizens to rebuild their lives and become productive citizens.

We are putting Truth into the hands of Those in Jail!

We don't just send them a Bible, we meet them personally and show how the Bible tells about Jesus Christ. We show them how to study the Bible. Since Jan, 2017 we have put about 240 Bibles into the hands of inmates.



Give a Bible to an inmate by sending a check to the Bible Fund.

Make the check payable to:

Yokefellowship Prison Ministry
PO Box 3114 - Wescosville, PA
18106

Important Dates To Remember...

- **Lehigh Valley Area Council Board Meetings**
Nov 16th 7 PM
Trinity Baptist Church. 689 S. Hillview Rd. Allentown, PA
- **Annual Membership Meeting**
December 21, 7 PM,
YPM Members must attend.
Trinity Baptist Church.

save Yokefellowship Money

Receive your copy of the Yokefellowship Newsletter by e-mail.

To get the newsletter by e-mail Just send us an e-mail at this address:

yokefellowpa@yahoo.com

Put **"Send YPM Newsletter"** in the subject line. That's it!

Inmate Feedback

From Yokefellowship Volunteers and Inmates at the Lehigh County Jail and the Community Corrections Center .

One inmate told me he is sentenced to many years in prison, but since Christ has changed his life he is excited that God will use him to reach others on this difficult mission field. He believes God has a good plan for his life! N.L.

God is good and I enjoy coming to Bible study to learn and hear the Word of God. A.R.

I'm glad to be here cause I feel free even though I'm locked up and I can see and tell of the changes He is making. E.P.

In my darkest times God was there to give me hope. I prayed, I cried and he heard me. Now I'm being released and I'll continue to follow God's path. L.V.

Please pray for my triplets I have on the way with my fiancé. She struggles with blood pressure while pregnant. D.P.

Pray for my family and children. E.J.

Pray for my family and kids and me that I will leave this place and do good. M.D.

Pray for my family and kids and that I stay humble. T.

Pray for upcoming court hearing and my son (9 months old) to overcome this battle and get back to my loved ones. A.

Thank you for the Bible and the fellowship. A.M.

Thank you Yokefellow for bringing all of us together with God. D.L.

Yokefellow lifts my spirit and helps me keep faith in God. Thank you. T.L.

God has sent Yokefellow to let us know He has not forgotten us. God bless you for bringing us the Word of God in the Bible. C.O.

You give me lots of hope and joy. D.

Every day I learn more about God's Word to me. Love learning to use the Bible. I am learning to trust in God. L.M.

Yokefellow brought my heart back to the right place, seeking hope through Christ Jesus. I am eternally grateful. D.B.

I wanted to read God's Word in here and Yokefellow gave me a Bible. I am reading it every day and attending the meetings to learn more. M.H.

Please pray for M. who had stopped using heroin but since her boyfriend got out of jail she has been missing for over three weeks. Please pray for her safety, that she stops using and that she breaks free from the man who brings her down. J.K.

Looking for a friendly church in the inner city?

Try Bethany E.C. Church, 224 N. 6th St., Allentown, PA 18102

- Sunday: Bible Study 9 am, Worship Service 10 am.
- Wednesday: Prayer Meeting 6 pm, Worship Service 7pm.
- Thursday: Senior Lunch (over 50) 12 – 1pm.
- Saturday: Food Bank, 9 am. Clothing bank on 2nd and 4th Sat. 9:30 am.

Warming Station at the Fountain Pool House on M.L.K. Jr. drive (near 8th street bridge) open from 7 pm to 7am daily. Other area churches also serve breakfast and lunch for those in the shelter.