



The Salt Shaker

You are the Salt of the Earth

The Newsletter of
 The Lower
 Bucks Center
 for Church &
 Community
 January 2007

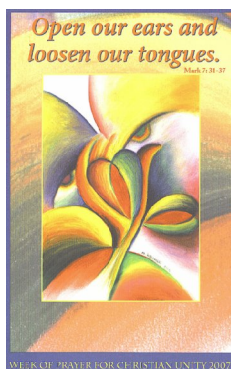
Upcoming Events You Won't Want to Miss!

- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- Martin Luther King Day Celebration
- Caring for Creation Breakfast
- Toolbox for Ministry

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Week of Prayer for Christian Unity January 18-25, 2007



Open our ears and loosen our tongues.
 [Mark 31: 31-37]

Celebrate Christian Unity at
 LBCCC's Christian Unity Breakfast
 and Ecumenical Prayer Service

People from many denominations will be getting together to eat and to pray for Christian Unity at a special event on Sat., Jan. 28, from 9 -11 AM, just after the end of the annual international Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Get to know people from different churches around tables as we share a delicious breakfast and focus on some fun and interesting questions. Each table will have a number of suggested questions to discuss around the theme for the week: "Open our ears and loosen our tongues," based on Mark 7:31-37. We promise an uplifting and inspiring time as we encourage one another to be in ministry individually and collectively as part of the larger body of Christ.

After breakfast we'll go upstairs to the sanctuary for an ecumenical celebration of worship, singing, praying, and
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Celebrate Martin Luther King!

Join people of good will from all over the county for the 21st Annual Martin Luther King Celebration on Sunday, January 14. Sponsored by the Bucks County Committee for Interracial Harmony, the 2007 program theme is In the Footsteps of a Dreamer. A highlight of the afternoon will be speeches two local religious leaders, The Reverend Blaske Blakesley, pastor of the Newtown Presbyterian Church, and Rabbi Elliott Strom of Shir Ami. Spirited music will fill the air as three choirs perform both separately and then together as



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The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, continued

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experiencing what it means to be part of the broader Family of God. The names of our congregations and faith traditions will be on a Christian Tree--as a visual sign of our common roots and history which have branched off to be expressed in a variety of wonderful ways. We respect our differences even while we celebrate our unity and the



power and encouragement we gain as we come together.

Help spread the word about this exciting Christian Unity Breakfast and Ecumenical Prayer Service: Be sure to register by January 21st by calling the pastor of the host Bensalem United Methodist Church, Reverend Debra Stanton at 215-245-1215 or e-mailing her at

pastords@infionline.net.

Bensalem United The Methodist Church, 4300

Hulmeville Rd., Bensalem, is located across from the Bensalem High School. Would you like to facilitate the table discussions or participate in the worship service (such as reading, leading a prayer, greeting, ushering, etc). Please let Pastor Debra know that, too. Let's all pray that God will bless us all and lead us to grow in unity, to make us a blessing to others!

Just What is the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity?

For one thing, it's celebrated world-wide, and it's been around in one form or another for almost 100 years! The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity began in the Episcopal Church in Graymoor, New York, in 1908. It was begun by Fr. Paul Wattson, an Episcopal priest who ten years earlier had co-founded an Episcopal Franciscan religious congregation known as the Society of the Atonement (The society was dedicated to Anglican and Roman Catholic reunion, and eventually Fr. Watson and his congregation were received into the Roman Catholic Church.)

Under several different names, observance of a special Week of

Prayer for unity has continued and grown since 1908. Over the years, churches of many Christian faith traditions felt called to join in the prayers for Christian unity as they saw the need for Christians from different churches to prayer together for unity.

In 1926, the Faith and Order movement published materials proposing that more Christian churches pray together for unity. By the late 1930's, Catholics were annually praying for unity during "The Church Unity Octave." Following the Second Vatican

Council in 1962-65, Roman Catholics began joining other Christians in prayers for unity during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Jan. 18-25.

Since 1966, materials used internationally for the Week of Prayer have been prepared jointly by the World Council of Churches and the Vatican. Each year's theme is suggested by churches of a different country.

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The 2007 Week of Christian Unity Theme: Open our Ears and Loosen our Tongues

The 2007 theme and materials have their origins in the experience of Christian communities in South Africa. The materials reflect the concerns and experience of a people who have undergone great suffering. A legacy of racism, unemployment and poverty continues to raise formidable challenges for its people. There is still a shortage of schools, medical clinics and adequate housing. Meeting with a member of the South African preparatory group, the international group reflected on the search for full visible unity among Christian churches in light of the experience of suffering by South African Christians and their invitation to 'break the silence' which oppresses and isolates people in their suffering. Together, they selected Mark 7: 31-37 as the scriptural theme, with the theme title inspired by verse 37, "He even makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak". Within a biblical framework of hearing, speaking and silence, they brought together in the international materials the search for unity and the search for a Christian response to human suffering. Interpreting this two-fold focus on unity and universal suffering in terms of having our ears opened and our tongues loosened, Graymoor's planning committee re-crafted the theme title as "Open our ears and loosen our tongues".

Martin Luther King celebration, continued

(Continued from page 1)

a mass choir. The choir of Macedonia Baptist Church and the Voices of St. Mark AME Zion Church, both in Newtown, will participate along with the choir of the United Christian Church in Levittown. Two

marching drill teams will also be on hand!

All this happens beginning at 3pm in the auditorium of the Bucks County Community College in

Newtown. Refreshments will follow. Come and renew your personal dedication to making the dream of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a reality for all Americans.

"...renew your personal dedication to making the dream of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a reality for all Americans."

Welcoming the Stranger Enrollments Boom!

A record number of students attended the just-concluded Welcoming the Stranger Fall Term! The free classes in English, computer training, and citizenship preparation were packed with eager learners having their

ears opened and tongues loosened by WTS teachers and helpers. From September through December, 180 different students attended classes. That's, an increase of 25% over the Fall Term of 2005! There were 17 separate

WTS classes, in six Bucks County communities: Bensalem, Bristol, Langhorne, Morrisville, Newtown, and Warminster. 31 teachers and volunteer helpers assisted. Of the 180 adult students, 84 were

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Caring for God's Beautiful Creation

Does anyone out there care about God's creation?

That's what LBCCC's Caring for Creation task force wants to know. They are calling local Christians and congregations to open their ears and minds about the environmental crisis we face and to loosen their tongues to make things better. Global warming environmental pollution ever higher rates of asthma and lung disease melting ice masses rising waters that destroy homes and the way of life followed by ancestors for generations polar bears drowning because ice masses are too far apart for to swim to. Enough already? Explore the solutions - like hybrid cars fluorescent and compact fluorescent light bulbs....wind power from PECO....recycling newspapers, glass, and plastic...energy audits of our homes and church buildings... and much more! Are you ready to join us as better stewards of God's wonderful world and universe?

"Are you ready to join us as better stewards of God's wonderful world and universe?"

Caring for Creation will bring pastors and congregational leaders together on Tues., March 6 for breakfast, Conversation, and Brainstorming on ways we Christians can take action on the environmental crisis. Joy Bergey of the Interfaith Climate Change Coalition will speak about the crises from the perspective of our shared Christian faith and its social justice mandates. Breakout groups will brainstorm ways for congregations and individuals to act, both separately and together. In the past few years, all our denominations have

issued policy statements calling their members to be better stewards of creation. Here's a chance to bring those statements to life locally. We need your ideas and your presence, so mark your calendars now! Watch your mailbox for more information on this exciting event.

Caring for Creation has plans and ideas for Earth Day celebrations, too, including a possible Earth Day Forum. Tentative date for the Forum is Sunday, April 22. The Forum hopes to attract a large crowd from many congregations for a film and discussion.



Members of the Caring for Creation task force have a wealth of information on speakers, workshops, resources, energy audits and other conservation efforts that can save money and precious resources for individuals and congregations. All of us can do more. Let this group show you how to begin. Better yet, join the group and work with us to make things better. Contact Pete Stevens (215-702-9827 petedadstevens@aol.com). to sign-up, get more information, or find out about the next meeting..

Interfaith Gathering News

The Interfaith Gathering is working on a project to over-come anti-Semitism by proposing that small groups view the DVD video "Sister Rose's Passion." Sister Rose Thering, a Dominican nun who died recently, devoted her life to improving relations between Catholics and Jews. Her main thrust was to encourage the Church to end the charge of "Christ-Killer." Her efforts helped to change negative attitudes and writings against Jews to positive ones and that led to Pope John XXIII's positive statement in the encyclical, "In Our Time," (Nostra aetate) which absolved Jews of guilt for the death of Jesus. Sister Rose also started the Jewish-Christian studies department at Seton Hall, taught there, and guided the college in Holocaust studies.



By viewing and discussing the video viewers can examine their own attitudes of prejudice against Jews and other religious groups and consider ways to change.

Any church that would be interested in hosting such a showing of the video to interested members of their congregation should get in touch with Rev. Don Richards, 215-943-0652, for information, loan of the DVD, and discussion questions.

**The Interfaith Gathering comes from a variety of faith traditions and meets monthly (2nd Tuesdays) to learn more about the history and practices of others. The group doesn't just focus on differences but also on what the different faiths have in common with one another. The goal is to help stem the fear that comes from the unknown and find helpful ways of living and growing in community.

Toolbox for Ministry Workshop Scheduled

A Tool Box for Ministry is scheduled for Thursday morning, March 8, from 9AM to 11:30 AM, location to be announced. Tool Box is LBCCC's periodic workshop to acquaint area clergy and church workers, especially those fairly new to Bucks County, to the wide array of services available in this community from organizations and agencies just waiting to help people in need. From food, to housing, to drug and alcohol, to mental health and beyond, we review resources that can assist the many people who turn to churches in their need. Tool Box always includes a review of the United Way Human Services Directory, speakers from local agencies, and an array of materials about local providers. We start off with a continental breakfast and time to mix with other Lower Bucks church people, and we frame the whole program in prayer. All that in just a few hours! You'll be home in time for lunch! Invitations to Tool Box will go out to all congregations in February. For information or to reserve your spot early, contact The Rev. Sandra Reed, 215-579-9295 or revsanreedl@aol.com. The fee of \$7.50 includes continental breakfast.



17th Annual Ecumenical Festival of Music! Sunday, May 6, 2007

MARK YOUR CALENDARS for LBCCC' 17th Annual Ecumenical Festival of Music with the theme

“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.” Psalm 150:6.

Our friends at St. John's United Methodist Church in Ivyland will host the festival this year on Sunday, May 6. Board member Belinda Ash will once again coordinate the festival. Call Belinda at 215-579-8383 for more information. .



In Memoriam

LBCCC mourns the recent loss of two friends and co-workers. Long-time board member Helen Hoffman died suddenly just after Thanksgiving. A cherished member of Fairless Hills United Methodist Church, Helen was active in many other organizations and activities including the Interfaith Gathering, Pennsbury Community Chorus, and Church Women United.

Sister Joanna Kerwin, a member of the Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart, died early in December after an illness of several months. She was a valued LBCCC board member who generously shared her extraordinary spiritual and personal gifts with us when she lived in Yardley in the 1990's. In her nearly 50 years as a Grey Nun, Joanna had been a High School teacher, college professor, retreat house director, and pastoral and administrative worker in several dioceses and parishes. LBCCC extends sincere sympathy to Helen's family and to Joanna's Grey Nun family as we thank God for these good, gifted, and generous women. May Helen and Sister Joanna rest in peace.

LBCCC & Children

Keep Those FLC Tooth Fairy Bags Coming!

You know, these are the bags of tooth paste, tooth brush, and other personal care items that FLOC gives to school nurses in Bensalem, Bristol Township, Bristol Borough, and Morrisville Borough schools for needy children. Emilie United Methodist Church members recently collected supplies for 26 bags, which FLOC promptly sent to Bristol Borough schools. As a Children's Sabbath project, Yardley United Methodist Church members collected items for 26 bags, which Sunday School Children helped to assemble. FLOC sent those to Morrisville. Our most faithful suppliers, the Forward Look women of Langhorne U. Methodist Church, continue to crank out the bags, a number of which recently went directly to Morrisville's Grandview School where a church member teaches. Contact Tammie Faggart (215-741-5996, tammiefaggart@hotmail.com) if you or your group would like to help with this project.



Advocates for Children Wanted, Too

With Congress and the PA state legislature beginning new sessions, it's time for FLOC to begin sending our E-mail legislative alerts again on issues important to children and families. Recently FLOC signed on to a national organization's letter urging Congress to pass a "clean" federal minimum wage increase bill without any other extraneous additions like measures to eliminate the death penalty. An alert went out to FLOC Advocates, too, urging them to take action personally on this issue. Join the Advocates to get periodic alerts by contacting Mary Ann Bentz, 215-295-2076 or maben730@aol.com



In the Community, In Brief...

BRIEFS ...Taize services continue at Morrisville Presbyterian Church. This meditative form of worship - with music, scripture, candlelight, and silence - was created in France by the Taize monastic community at the beginning of the Second World War. Its aim, then as now, was to reach out to youth and adults to promote reconciliation and peace among Christian denominations. Mark your calendars for 7 pm on Sundays, Feb. 25 and Apr. 22. For information, contact Ruth Workman, ruthworkman@prodigy.net Maternal health is the topic of this year's UN Association-USA Essay contest. Students (grades 9-12) must write a letter to the president of the United States answering two questions: Why is ensuring maternal health so important? What should the United States do to improve maternal health around the world? Submit essays, 1,500 words or less, to Elizabeth Huberman, 1382 Newtown-Langhorne Road, J-208, Newtown, PA 18940-2401, by Jan. 17. For complete rules, see www.unausa.org or contact Elizabeth Huberman at 215-968-2913 or dickhu@comcast.net. Children lead the congregation in prayer on the first Sundays of the month at St. James' Episcopal Church, Langhorne at the 10:15am First Sunday Youth service! A great way to honor our children's presence in church and to embrace their participation! More info at www.stjameslanghorne.org.



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January 2007 Change Service Requested

We're on the web!

www.lbc4cc.org

TO:

Annual Appeal Went Out, Gifts Come In! Thank You!

Many thanks to the congregations and individuals who have already responded to our annual appeal for 2006 membership in LBCCC! Your donations are the life blood of our work. Please remember us, too, in your prayers, and come to our events when you can. And to all those out there who have not yet answered our appeal, please send your tax-deductible donations to LBCCC, Box.1490, Levittown, PA 19058.

Welcoming the
Stranger Enrollment
Booms, continued

(Continued from page 3)



first-time attendees. That means the need continues to be great and word about the classes is spreading. In eight years now we have taught 1240 students from 79 different countries!

Two new part-time members have joined the WTS teaching staff. Both have had extensive experience as WTS volunteers. Karen Roy taught one of the Creekside English classes in Bensalem, and Heather Deiner will be teaching the Mothers Group English class in Morrisville. .

See the complete WTS schedule at www.welcomingthestranger.org. Contact Sturgis Poorman, 215-702-3445, ssjrp@yahoo.com, to volunteer, enroll, or learn more. Consider inviting a WTS speaker to your congregation or organization. They have a wonderful and inspiring story to tell!

Join LBCCC's online mailing list and receive all the news, at satellite speed!

It's easy! Just go to our website at

www.lbc4cc.org

and you will find our online signup form on the homepage of the website.

Fill out the form, submit it, and you will be automatically signed up!

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