

The Conference Call



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Summer 2010

RBCC continues to develop communication and connection resources for the Body of Christ in Berks County.

Check out these connection tools!



A tool designed to help congregations & individuals make connections to developmental, service, networking & needs resources



Zip code searchable data base of church youth programs in Berks. Also includes a youth activity calendar and facebook link.

To access any of these tools, click on the link on our website home page at www.readingberkschurches.org

Want to get listed on Nexus, the Resource Connection Hub, or Find-A-Church? Call or email the office:
 610-375-6108 or info@readingberkschurches.org



A denominationally organized listing of churches in Berks County. Churches with active websites can be accessed through these listings



Connecting the Body of Christ to events promoting faith, unity & service. Sign up on our website and receive all the latest info via weekly email.

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The Conference Call

June 2010



HOPE

Michael Kaucher, Executive Director

The past few months have passed quickly, filled with many God moments, trials and blessings. In our efforts we see the hand of God at work. This was most evident in the happenings of National Day of Prayer. What brought us to the events of this day was nothing short of a series of connections which revealed God in unlikely places and people. Who would have known that four hot-air balloons in the air would draw so much attention....attention to prayer! The prayers continued around the county at various churches, at the Reading House of Prayer (a group working toward 24/7 prayer coverage over the city of Reading), to our traditional noon-time gathering and an additional evening prayer celebration. We are so grateful to the many individuals who helped plan and all those who took time to pray on this National Day of Prayer. God showed us HOPE, FAITH, JOY and LOVE across the sky and these very values were expressed in the prayers of many individuals in public and private around Berks County. We were united in prayer and it was evident. Thank you to the Reading Eagle and Chanel 69 News for their reports on prayer.

There was a call by many in our public gatherings to be continually in prayer. I believe we can agree on this call. God is calling prayer to the forefront in a mighty way and as we unite in spirit and truth and prayer we will continue to see amazing things happen. We believe God is asking us to do something with the values of HOPE, FAITH, JOY and LOVE. Within all of these we can see Jesus, as he exemplified all these qualities and many more. We will be looking at each one of these as God leads and are inviting you to also explore them. We are led to begin with HOPE. The word hope shows up in the Bible over 125 times, with the books of Psalms, Job and Romans leading the way in usage. We face challenging times, but HOPE hangs there for us to pluck as spiritual "food" to carry us through, point us to answers and stir action inside us. Job plucked this "food" and ate it in the midst of unfathomable trials and ultimately saw a revival of his life and everything around him. As we eat of the "food" of HOPE we can be an encouragement to those around us and bring this value to life in our communities. Keep on the lookout for more HOPE news in the near future.

I'd like to thank the many congregations, individuals and businesses that have responded to our appeals for financial help. We thank you. As we continue to grow efforts to engage the Body of Christ to work together in Berks County, we ask for your continued support. Thank you for any amount you can contribute. We also hold your prayers in high regard and ask that you be on the lookout for opportunities to be the hands and feet of Jesus in your community. *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)*

Be the HOPE, reflect Jesus.

Our Mission:

- To foster unity and cooperation among the Christian churches of Reading and Berks County
- To provide witness in the community for shared Christian values
- To promote the ministries to our community in Christ's name
- To assist churches in fulfilling their individual and cooperative missions
- To encourage dialogue among all segments of the religious community



Berks County Prison, Chaplain Eileen McKeown, *Supervising Chaplain*

Around the beginning of last year, a female inmate in her early 30's stood out from among the others. She seemed lost, fearful and hopeless, allowing life's circumstances to just push her along. But there were occasional sparks of life that shot out from her, and could not be ignored. One day, she bounded into my office, insisting that I tell her about a program she had just heard about – the Lazarus Project. What was it? How can she get into it? Why is it called that? Her enthusiasm was overwhelming, and simple answers could abort what was about to be born. So, I put on the brakes, told her to sit, and tell me about "Sue" (not her real name.)

She spoke of the death of her parents, and other tragedies in her life that left her to fend for herself. She had no one to call "family," and no one to care whether she lived or died. There was a great sadness that hovered over her like a cloud; her sense of self-worth was nil, and she envisioned no future for herself. Her only plan was to do her time, leave and let the pieces fall where they may. A religious volunteer, who met with her on a weekly basis during the professional clergy visits in the chapel, had suggested, after a few meetings, that Sue might be a good candidate for the Lazarus Project, but Sue needed to ask for it herself. It was important that she see it, not as a way out of her dead end street, but a way into a world of difficult choices, and a narrow road that could lead to transformation.

One of the requirements of the Lazarus Project is to read certain books that speak directly to growth in character. One of these, Hinds Feet On High Places, was sitting on my desk. She asked to read it. This was the first of many that she "devoured," reporting back on how each challenged her status quo. Her exceptional intelligence and potential were becoming more and more evident. Finally, the time when she could be released was approaching. As I met with inmates on the unit one night, she came to tell me that someone was picking her up the next day, courtesy of another inmate on her block! We talked it over, she promised not to go, and I immediately contacted a program that reluctantly agreed to take her.

Almost a year has passed since then. Whenever one of us contacts this same program, they immediately thank us for sending Sue to them. Her growth has been phenomenal; she is happy, healthy, an asset to the community, and has finally found the "family" she lacked. Participation in her journey has greatly benefited each of us in the Chapel Department, as well as the volunteers who generously worked and prayed with her.



Salvation Army "SHARE REPORT" Kay Meitrott



The SHARE Furniture Bank has lost it's location! Until another site is located we have had to stop pick ups of furniture and other household items. This is causing a real hardship on the many families who rely on the Furniture Bank for assistance. If you know of a large warehouse with easy access, will you call our office at 610-373-5208? We are looking for space for storage of the Christmas supplies as well as the furniture bank operation. We will need approximately 5000 square feet...more would be better!

DAY CAMP is almost here. We are planning for 30 children daily at a cost of \$30 per week. Eight very exciting weeks are planned with a different theme each week. Activities will also include swimming, crafts, computer lab, and much more. For more information or to register your 6 to 12 year old call, Kay at 610-373-5208 x 205.



**Berks County Youth Center & Berks County Family Residential Center
Dave Ludwig, Supervising Chaplain
About the Youth**

I've been serving as Chaplain at the Berks County Youth Center (BCYC) for almost a year now, and I've learned some things about these youth that I'd like for you to know.

- * The youth are curious about God
- * Many of them have no former knowledge of the Bible.
- * Most of them have never attended a church or they haven't attended in a long time.
- * Most of them claim to have no faith preference, yet when I talk to them I discover that they believe in God and Jesus; they just don't refer to themselves as Christians.

These things may not come as a surprise to you, but I share them because I think it's important to keep these characteristics fresh in our minds, especially if we are ministering to youth in our congregations.

When the youth leave the Center, some of them are going back to homes in *your* community. If they hear about God for the first time, or reunite with Him while they are at BCYC, it is part of my vision to help connect them with a church that will "accept them" and disciple them.... So that they won't fall prey to the devil's snare (1 Peter 5:8).

It is also my desire to get to meet some of you, to begin to build a partnership, so that when the teens leave the Center I can connect them with a caring person, a church body that wants to continue to help them and show them the love of Jesus.

How can you help me?

I am always in need of paperback Bibles. (Remember, the youth are unchurched, so Bibles like the *New Century Version, Contemporary English Version, or New International Version* are best).

Paperback books. Positive message, a story that they can relate to will get well read.

Monetary donations, designated to the Youth Center. I have found a publisher where I can get youth-oriented devotional books for \$1.00 each. These books are written specifically for juveniles in detention (hard to find), and I would love to be able to give one to every youth that comes to the Center. Any donation would be appreciated.

Pray. Your prayers are very appreciated, for the youth, the volunteers and for me.

Thank you, and may God continue to shine His light on you!

All For His Glory,

Chaplain Dave

Important Dates: Mark Your Calendar!



Annual Hymn Sing at Gring's Mill—
Sunday, August 1st, 6:00pm

Mayors' Prayer
Breakfast at Reading Crowne

Tuesday, Sept 28, 7:15am

Speaker: Bishop John Barres




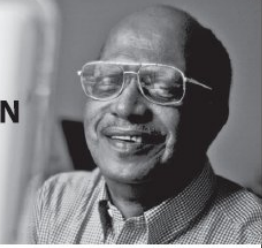
Reading CROP Walk

At Gring's Mill

Sunday Oct, 10, Walk begins at 1:30pm

Take the 10-10-10 Challenge!!

For more information on any of these events
please visit our website at
www.readingberkschurches.org

Are you a non-profit organization who needs an extra, reliable worker?

If you are willing to provide some training, we will provide a volunteer to you at no cost for 18 hours a week.

WorkSearch

The AARP Foundation WorkSearch program offers on-line assessments and skills training and can link you to jobs in your community with employers that value your experience.

If you are 55 or over, the senior community service employment program may be able to help you.

**For more information:
Call 610-375-2576
or email: screadingpa@aol.com**

Reading Berks Conference of Churches relies on your contributions to continue the work presented through its Mission Statement and evidenced by the witness in these pages. To those who regularly donate so generously, we say thank you! To all, we ask for your support. Please use the enclosed envelope to send your tax deductible donation; any amount is a blessing. And again, we say Thank You!