



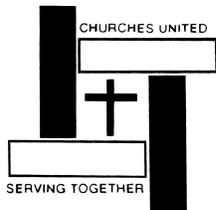
Spring 2018

“For everything there is a season,
and a time for every matter under heaven.”

Ecclesiastes 3:1

WCM CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

SPECIAL EVENT COMING OCTOBER 20!



Wilkinsburg Community Ministry



WILKINSBURG
COMMUNITY MINISTRY
CHURCHES UNITED, SERVING TOGETHER

Just as the design of the Wilkinsburg Community Ministry logo has changed over the years, the WCM programs have evolved and adapted to respond to the most imperative needs of the time in Wilkinsburg. WCM began as a response to the changing social conditions occurring in Wilkinsburg in the mid-to-late 1960's. Local congregations saw a need for people of all races and cultures to better understand each other. In April, 1966, a steering committee of laity and clergy from several churches was formed to examine the challenges. Subsequently, clergy and lay leaders from 10 congregations then formed the Board of Directors for WCM in 1968. The first budget was drawn from a \$1 pledge per member of cooperating churches. The late Rev. Sam McGill, then pastor of St. Mark AME Church, served as first chaplain of WCM.

Today, still acting as the cooperative body of the member congregations, local businesses, individuals and service groups, WCM develops and implements programs to meet the physical, social, economic and spiritual needs of the people of Wilkinsburg. Fourteen congregations, several foundations, community organizations and businesses and a host of individuals support the Ministry's budget. Congregations provide about one-third of WCM's operating budget; individuals, service organizations and foundations provide another third; and the remainder is supported through catering and state reimbursement of our children's food programs.

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends,

WCM 50th Anniversary!

Fifty years ago, Wilkinsburg faced a summer of discontent. Throughout the country, frustrated communities living on the edge of poverty had erupted in violence. Wilkinsburg was not immune, although we didn't have the rough summer that Newark had. Several far sighted individuals noted that Wilkinsburg was facing a serious decline in population, employment opportunities and was on the verge of urban blight. The "Great Society" highlighted by President Johnson was likely to pass Wilkinsburg by.

Out of this, Wilkinsburg Community Ministry was born, a collaboration of congregations working together to network and develop social service safety nets.

Great Societies begin at home. The urban disaster foreseen by our founders came to pass. Wilkinsburg's population halved, the tax base eroded and families who could leave, did so. Many of those who remain struggle with housing insecurity, food insecurity, illiteracy, domestic violence and under-employment.

Since 1968, WCM has offered a variety of social service programs, including food bank, counseling, energy assistance, clothing, emergency services, Meals on Wheels... Today, we focus on food and networking. We still have a food pantry, and we serve several hundred people a month through the pantry. We also run a non-profit food and catering service for a local school and for several after-school programs serving at-risk kids. We provide catering for a senior program, and several other non-profit meetings. We provide resource referrals for people in need of help, and collaborate with other community partners to meet the needs of Wilkinsburg's residents.

Today, as it did 50 years ago, Wilkinsburg Community Ministry remains true to the mission of responding to persistent needs of people of all faiths, addressing the human service crises in our community.

Cheers and joy!

Ruth Kittner
Executive Director, WCM

URGENT NEEDS DAY OF GIVING BENEFITS WCM

The Urgent Needs Day of Giving, held on May 1, grew out of the general Day of Giving the Pittsburgh Foundation sponsors. If you recall, the Day of Giving two years ago ended in a disaster when the website crashed. In the course of restructuring, the Foundation asked us what our needs were, and many of the smaller organizations, such as WCM, pointed out that it was difficult to compete with the big non-profits for donor dollars. We asked if we could have our own Day of Giving specifically focused at those organizations that meet the community's urgent needs for food and housing security. Since then, the Urgent Needs Day of Giving, in early May, has focused on helping shelters, food pantries, and similar organizations. The Day always creeps up on folks, though, and this year we used our new database to reach out to WCM supporters to send a reminder. That post card you received at the end of April was a result of our being able to quickly (and with relative accuracy) create a quick notification of an event to our friends. Please see the database article below.

This year we raised a total of \$3,414.00. Pittsburgh Foundation will deduct some credit card and processing fees, and then match the balance with \$1.37 per dollar. Thank you to all who participated! In addition to those listed below, there were also 5 anonymous gifts.

Rhonda Apossos	Carl Hockenberry	Richard Monheim
Harry Back	Bradley Jones	Tom & Connie Ochs
William Beggs	Peter & Leslie Kaplan	Rita Platt
Nancy Chalfont-Walker	Mary Kilgour	Mark Roth
Gerald Dalton	Lynn Kittner	Michael Rucker
Joe Davis	Ruth Kittner	Melissa Rychener
David Duncan	Rebecca Klaw	Roger & Vicki Schneider
Jane Taylor Fox	Susan Koehler	Mary Beth Simon
Thomas Golightly	Angel Lehrian	Kelly Smith
Barbara Gundy	Tawna Loutsenhizer	Barbara Thaw
Frances Hardic	Joan Maser	Gwen Vargas
Patricia Hauser	Judith Mitchell	Jeffrey Workman

NEW WCM DATABASE IMPROVES ACCURACY

Technically, it's our first database, and it was developed with assistance from Deb Sadowski of the Forbes Fund, from which we have a grant to develop better management and administrative systems. Until now, we were using a combination of Excel spreadsheets to create mailing lists. It was cumbersome and sometimes (often?) inaccurate. Now we have a unified database with all our contacts listed in one location. We can automatically update addresses, phone numbers and emails and we can add people easily. Using something called "pivot tables", we can sort out specific mailing lists (snail mail and email) and we can link contributions to donors. We cannot yet link donors to contributions - that is, look up a donor and see what they have contributed - but we should be there soon.

The database has made life a lot easier, and more predictable, but there are still many mistakes in the system: errors arose out of merging several sets of information into one database. If you get a newsletter or a letter that is incorrectly addressed or we've misspelled your name, please let us know. We still are not able to track gifts earlier than 2017, nor can we identify the specific purpose of gifts (memorial, in honor of, project, or general), but we're working on a more comprehensive way of going forward with the new system.

Thank you for your patience.

A GUIDE TO NUTRITION PROGRAMS WITH FEDERAL FUNDING

The **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program** (SNAP), also known as Food Stamps, plays a critical role in the battle against hunger for children, seniors and families across our Commonwealth and throughout our Nation. For every dollar invested in this program, it is estimated that the economy gets \$1.75 in return. The program fuels consumer spending while providing much needed nutrition for 1.7 million Pennsylvanians. SNAP benefits are doubled at Farmers' Markets.

The **Emergency Food Assistance Program** (TEFAP) provides the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) foods and federal support to food banks and food pantries.

Summer Food Service Program supports childhood nutrition by providing free meals and snacks to children under the age of 18 at public and private institutions during the summer. This program can be accessed at schools that run summer youth programs, camps or other recreation sites. Unfortunately, thousands of children eligible to receive free meals during the summer months do not know about or take advantage of these programs.

The **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children** (WIC) is a vital program that provides low-income mothers with education, assistance and support to establish healthy habits and lifestyles for their families. Through the program, mothers can receive information concerning breastfeeding, as well as receive WIC food packages and vouchers for nutritious food. The WIC program in the 15221 zip code operates at Hosanna House. Another one operates at Westinghouse Human Services in Turtle Creek.

In spite of these and other programs, accessibility to affordable food is a serious ongoing problem.

FARM TO FOOD BANK ACT WOULD HELP MINIMIZE WASTED FOOD

In the United States, millions of Americans struggle with hunger every day, despite the fact that a tremendous amount of food that is produced in this country goes to waste. Food products are often discarded on the farm if they are considered "ugly" produce, if they are overproduced, if market conditions are unfavorable or if an existing contract or retail market is lost. To respond to these issues and feed the most vulnerable, U.S. Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) introduced the *Farm to Food Bank Act*. This legislation is designed to establish food recovery networks in each state to incentivize farmers to donate their product directly to food banks to be distributed to those in need. The bill would assist farmers and ranchers by reimbursing them for the costs to produce, harvest, pack, process, store or transport to food banks food that is safe for consumption but does not have access to a retail market or supply chain.

Specifically, the *Farm to Food Bank Act* would:

- **Establish a Farm to Food Bank Network** in a state or region by utilizing a non-profit's existing networks and infrastructure to aggregate, transport, store and distribute food.
- **Support farmers** by reimbursing them for the costs to produce, harvest, pack, process, store or transport to food banks the food that would otherwise go to waste.
- **Support food banks and emergency food providers** by supplementing the products that food banks receive through The Emergency Food Assistance Program.
- **Provide flexibility for states and tribes** to opt in to the program and establish and manage state-wide or regional systems that can respond to local needs.

(Continued on next page)

- **Provide healthy food to those in need** by incentivizing the donation of a wide variety of agriculture products including: fruits, vegetables, meat, poultry, non-amenable products (such as bison, domestic deer, pheasant, quail, or domestic rabbits), dairy, fish, eggs, grains, legumes, seeds or nuts.
- **Assess the level of food waste** that is occurring at the farm level through a USDA study and report to Congress to evaluate the methods of measuring food waste, standards for the volume of food waste and causal factors of food waste.

This project extends a lot of the “food rescue” efforts focused on restaurants and grocery stores to save food that would normally go to waste. It reaches past the commercial distribution point to the production point, to salvage food that might be ugly (malformed, mislabeled) to channel it to food banks and food pantries.

WCM SUMMER FOOD PROGRAM BEGINS

We open our Summer Food Program for Wilkinsburg children and teens on June 4 through August 10. Meals are served in the Fellowship Hall of South Avenue United Methodist Church. Breakfast is available from 9:00 - 9:30 and lunch is served from 12:00 - 1:00. We also distribute a snack following lunch. Any child may come for lunch. Parents may bring children and we will have sandwiches available for parents. Hot meals may be available once all children have been served.

We also provide bag lunches and/or hot meals for Wilkinsburg programs operating at the Wilkinsburg Public Library, the Christian Church of Wilkinsburg and Community Forge. Some of the programs (such as Entertainment Consortium) feed the children and WCM provides the food. For more information, please contact the programs directly at the links listed below. Children registered at or participating in those programs may be eligible for meals.

- Wilkinsburg Public Library <http://www.wilkinsburglibrary.org/wilkinsburg.php> . Contact Taylor Lee in the Children’s department at 412-244-2944.
- Park-It (Wilkinsburg Parks programs) <https://www.wilkinsburgpa.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation/> . Call 412-244-2900.
- Entertainment Consortium <http://www.teconsortium.com/CONTACT-US.html> .
- Community Forge <http://www.forge.community/> .

BACK-TO-SCHOOL COLLECTIONS BEGIN

We collect items and assemble kits for elementary age children who attend Kelly and Turner schools between now and August 15. The following items may be dropped off at the WCM office:

- ◆ School uniform—t-shirts, shorts/slacks, skirts. You can get them at Walmart or Target.
- ◆ School Hygiene kits: shampoo, body soap, hand lotion, tooth brushes, toothpaste, combs, brushes, hair ornaments, deodorant, feminine hygiene products, tissues (Kleenex type).
- ◆ School bags (small back packs)
- ◆ For Seats and Feet: socks, underwear.

We also send a portion of these items to the Children’s Department at the Wilkinsburg Public Library.

EXTRA, EXTRA, READ ALL ABOUT IT!

A sampling of exciting programs and happenings in Wilkinsburg

- **Community Life** is an independent-living program for seniors operating in Allegheny County. The program goal: help seniors stay in their homes. To be eligible, participants must be at least 55 years of age, clinically eligible, and able to live safely in their homes with some assistance. Call 1-866-419-1693 to talk to an Intake Specialist.
- **Kids Can Cook:** Learning Life-Long Health Habits Study. A Pitt research program offers four free sessions to teach single African American mothers with daughters ages 8-11. Contact Dr. Willa Doswell at 412-624-8977.
- **Community Forge:** The old Johnson School at Franklin and Ardmore Blvd has been renovated as a community resource center.
- **2nd Saturday Grandmothers and Moms Group** provides an opportunity to meet with other grandmothers and moms in a supportive, safe atmosphere to share concerns, resources and blessings. Lunch is provided along with raffle prizes and giveaways! Meets on the 2nd Saturday of each month at Hosanna House at 11:00 AM.
- **Allegheny Lead Safe Homes** program. Lead is dangerous to children under six because their brains and nervous systems are still developing. And they cannot keep their hands, their fingers, and lots of other things out of their mouths. There is no safe level of lead. It is also in the soil, the water, and sometimes in food. The Lead Safe Homes program provides free home testing, education, and remediation to keep families safe from lead paint. It's open to home owners and renters living in homes built before 1978, with children under 6 who live there or visit regularly, or occupied by a pregnant woman. There is an income qualification, and it's also open to landlords who have tenants who meet these qualifications.
Contact: 412-227-5700 or email alleghenylead@actionhousing.org.
- **Senior Fun Day** celebrated every month, usually the third Tuesday at the Wilkinsburg Borough Building, with lunch (provided by WCM), and a program. The seniors have enjoyed arts and crafts led by Barb Thaw and Gail Gratton, from the Mifflin Avenue United Methodist Church. Contact Taylor Lee, at the Wilkinsburg Public Library, 412-244-2944, for more information.
- **Wilkinsburg Chamber of Commerce** is celebrating its 125th anniversary this year with a party on September 20. Details on their website, <http://www.wilkinsburgchamber.com/>.
- The **Wilkinsburg Thursday Market** began June 14, and operates every Thursday through November at 3:00 at the corner of Trenton and Penn Avenue. Food, local produce, plants, crafts, and much more.

PITTSBURGH EAST CROP HUNGER WALK TO BENEFIT WCM

2018 Walk Planned for Sunday, October 14



The Church World Service CROP Hunger Walks have a long history of fighting hunger locally and around the world. Last year WCM received \$4,513.60, which represents a portion of the total funds raised in the Pittsburgh East Walk. Mark your calendars now to walk or contribute. The Walk begins and ends at South Avenue United Methodist Church. The course covers a 6 mile route and also includes a shorter 1 mile walk option. More information will be provided in an upcoming issue.

Celebrating 50 Years of Service (continued from page 1)

Since 1968, WCM has provided a variety of services to the community. In recent years, WCM has focused on the nutrition needs of Wilkinsburg residents. WCM operates a food pantry for families and provides holiday food baskets for Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. In addition, WCM provides meals for youth in a school for autistic students, as well as for at-risk children in after-school and weekend programs throughout the community. During the summer, when free school lunches are unavailable, WCM provides week-day lunches, snacks, and suppers. It also partners with local schools and businesses to provide hygiene necessities and school supplies for elementary school children.

***Please plan to join us as we celebrate 50 years of WCM
on Saturday, October 20! More information coming soon.***

WOULD YOU PREFER TO RECEIVE THE WELL ELECTRONICALLY?

We have begun offering the WELL electronically in a PDF form by email and on our website, in addition to the paper edition. Funding is an on-going challenge and these new offerings will help save on postage and printing costs. There are two ways you can sign up for an electronic copy of the WELL: (1) Click on the "Info" tab and then the "Contact Us" tab to sign up on the WCM website and future copies of the WELL will be delivered to your email address or (2) you can send us the form at the bottom of this page listing your name, address and email address and then checking the box at the bottom. If you do neither of these, you will continue to receive a paper copy. You can also update your street address, phone number and other contact information online at www.wcm15221.org.

PLEASE USE THIS NEW FORM FOR YOUR MAIL-IN CONTRIBUTION

Please consider making a new or additional contribution to WCM at this time. Contributions may be made at **ANYTIME** by going to <http://www.wcm15221.org> and clicking on the "Donate Now" button, where you can donate by credit card or PayPal. The website also has a special link to "GoFundMe." You may also use the form below. Please send your check to Donations Administrator at Wilkinsburg Community Ministry, 702/704 Wood Street, Wilkinsburg, PA, 15221.

WCM also participates in the Contributor Choice program of the United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania. To designate WCM at work, please reference our agency code **242**.

- \$10 supports after-school snacks and meals for 3 children
- \$25.00 provides a turkey or ham for a family of 5 at Thanksgiving or Christmas
- \$45.00 is 3 days of emergency food for 2 adults and a child
- \$95.00 is 4 days of food for a family of 5 \$500.00 pays the WCM milk bill for a month
- Other \$_____ Please use my contribution where it is most needed

I/We want to join in your efforts to help others and will subscribe the following amount:

Payable: Enclosed \$_____ Monthly \$_____ Quarterly \$_____ Date: _____

Name *(please print)* _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ Email address _____

- I/We would like to receive the WELL electronically.

Wilkesburg Community Ministry
702/704 Wood Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15221

Non-Profit Organization
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PAID
Pittsburgh, PA
Permit No. 870

RETURN SERVICE
REQUESTED

**DATED MATERIAL -
PLEASE EXPEDITE**

Wilkesburg Community Ministry Churches United - Serving Together

Wilkesburg Community Ministry, a non-profit organization supported by area residents and congregations, responds to persistent needs of people of all faiths, addressing the human service crises in our community.

Spring 2018



WILKESBURG
COMMUNITY MINISTRY

Wilkesburg Community Ministry

Phone 412-241-8072 FAX 412-241-8315

E-mail: [caring @wcm15221.org](mailto:caring@wcm15221.org) Website: www.wcm15221.org

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