

## 'Charting Our Ecumenical Future' focus of lecture for Christian unity

By TAMI QUIGLEY  
Staff writer

As the keynote of this year's Campbell Lecture for Christian Unity April 7 at Dubbs Memorial Community Center of the Lehigh Conference of Churches (LCC), Allentown, Dr. Robert Jones showed the clergy gathered two photos.

One was a black and white photo, a Norman Rockwell scene of a traditional family at the dinner table, representative of the white Christian America of the 1950s.

The other was a screen shot of a 2005 Coca-Cola commercial that featured people who reflected the ethnic diversity in America sitting at a table, and of course drinking Coke.

**"How do we find a way where no one owns the table but everyone pulls up a chair?"**

"How do we find a way where no one owns the table but everyone pulls up a chair?" Jones asked.

Jones is CEO of the Public Religion Research Institute, and a leading scholar and commentator on religion, culture and politics. He is frequently featured in national media, including CNN and The New York Times.

Author of the 2016 book "The End of White Christian America," Jones dis-



Dr. Robert Jones makes a point while presenting the Campbell Lecture for Christian Unity April 7 at Dubbs Memorial Community Center, Allentown. (Photos by John Simitz)

cussed the impact of demographic changes on the future of evangelization.

Jones said there has been a cultural

change in America, which is no longer demographically or culturally a majority white, Christian nation.

White Christians in America now comprise 43 percent of the population, compared to 54 percent in 2008 when Barack Obama was first elected president.

Why the decline?

Jones cited demographic shifts including immigration patterns, as well as young adults' rejection of organized religion. Jones said while mainline Protestant denominations have seen a decline over several decades, the decline for evangelical Protestant denominations is more recent.

Clergy listen to Robert Jones' morning presentation.

"The country is divided on whether things have changed culturally for better or worse since the 1950s," Jones said, noting 51 percent say for the worse and 48 percent for the better.

"No other group believes things have changed for the worse since the 1950s more than white evangelical Protestants," Jones said, citing their number at 74 percent. "They think the 'Mayberry,' 'Leave It to Beaver' time seemed like the golden age.

"We're at the tipping point. White evangelicals are used to being in power. The real challenge is how we tell the story of our country that both embrace?"

"I'm from Macon, Georgia, and there are two Baptist churches on either side of a hill. One, a white congregation, was founded before the Civil War. The black congregation was founded after the Civil War. Jones said recently both churches got new, young pastors looking for ways to find common ground."

"They started by having an Easter egg roll together on the hill between the churches. The kids came and the parents followed," Jones said, noting it's a start.

The Rev. Dr. Larry Pickens, ecumenical director of LCC, welcomed those gathered for the morning session that began with a brief worship service.

Established by LCC in 1990 and held annually since 1993, the Campbell lectures inform and educate leaders, congregations and the wider public on the enduring importance of Christian unity and its potential for addressing problems facing society.

LCC seeks to unite Christians through community service, ecumenical ministry, and advocacy for social justice, while administering housing and social service programs that meet basic human needs.

The Campbell lectures are in memory of Robert Campbell, a former chief executive officer of PPL and devout ecumenist who actively encouraged Christian unity. Since its inception the annual lectures have brought distinguished scholars and theologians to the Lehigh Valley.

For more information on LCC, visit [www.lehighchurches.org](http://www.lehighchurches.org) or call 610-433-7220.



## 2017 parish advocate conference on 'Understanding Dementia'

The 2017 Ministry with Persons with Disabilities half-day conference for all parish advocates will be Saturday, April 29 at the religious education building of St. Mary, Kutztown.

This year's theme, "Understanding Dementia," will be addressed by a speaker from Phoebe Center for Excellence in Dementia Care.

Registration and light refreshments

will begin at 8:30 a.m., with welcome and opening prayer at 9 a.m.

All advocates are strongly urged to attend. (If unable to do so a representative should be sent in their place.)

For more information, contact Sister Janice Marie Johnson, director of the Office for Ministry with Persons with Disabilities, 610-289-8900, ext. 42 or [jjohnson@allentowndiocese.org](mailto:jjohnson@allentowndiocese.org), or visit website [www.allentowndiocese.org/pwd](http://www.allentowndiocese.org/pwd).



**Office for Ministry with Persons with Disabilities**  
All Are Welcome Diocese of Allentown

*"We are a single flock under the care of a single shepherd. There can be no separate Church for persons with disabilities."*  
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

## 'Faith and Spirits' to discuss 'Secrets of Fatima'

What are the secrets of Fatima? Have the secret predictions come to pass? What does Our Lady want us to do?

These are among the questions to be discussed Monday, April 24 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. during "Faith and Spirits" at

Allentown Brew Works, 812 Hamilton St., Allentown.

"The Secrets of Fatima" will be presented by David Carollo, executive director of the World Apostolate of Fatima USA.

participants' expense. No registration is required, just show up and bring a friend. Seating is first-come, first-served.

For more information, call 610-289-8900, ext. 21, or email [adultformation@allentowndiocese.org](mailto:adultformation@allentowndiocese.org).

To view video clips of previous "Faith and Spirits" events, visit YouTube channel "Allentown Diocese: Office of Adult Formation."

## Prayer and Care Day for Caregivers June 24

The Prayer and Care Day for Caregivers - previously held in Berks, Lehigh and Northampton counties - was so well received that it will be repeated this year for the Carbon and Schuylkill deaneries.

This year's event will be Saturday, June 24 at St. Joseph Center for Special Learning, Pottsville.

The morning will be devoted to talks given by Sister Christen Shukwit on "The Spirituality of Caregiving."

After lunch a variety of activities for pampering the caregiver will be available.

There is no charge to the caregiver for this day.

If you are or know someone who is a caregiver for a loved one who is ill or has a disability and is English-speaking, this day is for you.

To receive an invitation, contact Sister Janice Marie Johnson at [jjohnson@allentowndiocese.org](mailto:jjohnson@allentowndiocese.org) or 610-657-9624.