

# The Swifts are back!

[The Bethlehem Gadfly](#) [Environment](#), [Swifts](#) April 28, 2021

🦉 *Latest in a series of posts on the Swifts* 🦉

The Swifts are the official City Bird of Bethlehem  
They need your help



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**Dear Friends of the Swifts**—John and Lynn Noble, Wilbur Mansion Development Team, Lehigh Valley Audubon Society, Sierra Club Lehigh Valley, Bethlehem City Council and Environmental Advisory Council, Lehigh University Environmental Initiative and Southside Initiative, Freemansburg Elementary School, Artefact Inc., Poets, Journalists, and Concerned Citizens,

Wonderful news! The swifts are back! And they are using the Masonic Temple chimney as a roosting site for spring migration on their way from South America to the Northeastern United States and Southeastern Canada! I watched 400-500 swifts enter the freestanding chimney on the Wilbur Mansion property yesterday evening, April 27th around 8:00 PM. It was a beautiful sight to see!



Congratulations to the Bethlehem S.O.S. Save Our Swifts team!

Tremendous thanks to John and Lynn Noble for carefully preserving the 45 foot high 5 foot square chimney while demolishing the Masonic Temple in the course of redevelopment of the Wilbur Mansion property.

(See photo above taken a few months ago). Many thanks to the Bethlehem City Council for naming the Chimney Swift the official Bird of Bethlehem and to Lynn Rothman and the Environmental Advisory Council for supporting the effort to protect the swifts. Thanks to Scott Burnett and Peter Saenger of the Lehigh Valley Audubon Society for educating us about these amazing birds and leading the charge to save them. Thanks to the Lehigh Valley Engaged Humanities Council for funding and the Bethlehem Area Public Library for hosting Public Forums to engage citizens in the effort to embrace the bird that has adapted to our urban habitat. Thanks to Freemansburg Elementary School students for speaking out on behalf of the birds. Thanks to Lehigh University professors and students for continuing to work for habitat preservation and restoration. Thanks to The Bethlehem Gadfly and all the wonderful journalists who continue to tell the story of the birds of Bethlehem.

Jennie Gilrain

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*Gadfly wonders (and worries a bit) about the impact of the proposed plans for widening Rt 378 on the site. Perhaps we will hear from Mr. Noble about that.*



**Save Our Swifts**  
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