

SEEDS OF HOPE

a Newsletter from Outreach for Hope Inc.

Summer 2013 Issue 07



Volunteer, Rick Tillis, picking up food for program at Florist Ave. L.C.



RESCUED FOOD FEEDS AND FUELS NEW MINISTRY PASSION

When Rick Tillis arrives at St. Matthew's at his assigned time on Monday mornings he knows just where to go. Three-quarters of the way down the lower level hallway on the right-hand side is a sign taped to the wall with one hand-written word: "Florist." "Florist" is Florist Avenue Lutheran Church at N. 40th in Milwaukee, a church funded by Outreach for Hope. At Florist Rick helps run the Community Outreach program on Saturday mornings. Piled underneath the sign at St. Matthew's are boxes of food. The boxes include bakery, produce, and pans of food already cooked and ready to heat and serve.



Volunteers assemble meals each week

Every half hour on Monday morning a different church representative arrives, finds the hand written sign for his or her congregation, snags one of the carts, and loads up the food to take to their church for a week of outreach ministry, accented by quality, healthy food. A half hour after Rick Tillis leaves, Eddie Brooks arrives to pick up the food for Capitol Drive Lutheran Church at 52nd St. and Capitol, another Outreach for Hope sponsored congregation. He delivers the food to the Sherman Park Gathering Place, run by Capitol Drive in their church. Thirteen ministries in all receive food each week through "Just One More," part of the meal outreach ministry of St. Matthew's

Lutheran Church in Wauwatosa.

It started with a box of bread

The ministry that brings the collection of church representatives to St. Matthew's each Monday morning began four years ago with a box of bread which St. Matthew's member, Chris Capper, was asked to take from St. Matthew's to Reformation Lutheran Church at 35th and North Avenue in Milwaukee. With his experience in the food industry and skill in networking, that box full of bread inspired Chris to help St. Matthew's begin a 'food rescue' ministry. Each week Chris and his volunteers 'rescue' 600-700 bakery items, 1000 pounds of produce, and enough previously prepared food to package into 1500 meals.

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“We have only scratched the surface”

St. Matthew’s, located in Wauwatosa, is not a congregation you might expect to be a recipient of an Outreach for Hope grant. But when Chris Capper began to ‘rescue’ food from restaurants, bakeries, and grocery stores, which had been designated to be thrown away, it was clear that God was opening a whole new door, and so far it is open just a crack. Pastor Chris Manke, lead pastor at St. Matthews, observed, “We have only scratched the surface in gathering the food that is available to feed people, and would otherwise be thrown away.”

The staff and leadership of St. Matthew’s put their full effort into beginning to respond to the potential. The church and its members have made a substantial financial commitment to the program and the infrastructure needed to run a successful and safe food program. Foundations and organizations, including the Siebert Lutheran Foundation, have been crucial to the start-up. Outreach for Hope also awarded a grant for the start-up. Not only is this ministry opening new doors, but each of the ministries receiving food, rescued weekly by the St. Matthew’s team, is directly or indirectly associated with Outreach for Hope.

Rick Tillis knows what a difference the “Just One More” meal outreach



Volunteer, Eddie Brooks, loading ‘rescued’ food for Capitol Dr.

ministry makes for the mission of Florist Avenue Lutheran Church. He said, “We were trying to feed 20-30 people on Saturday, many of them children. Now with the food we receive from the Meal Outreach Ministry we have as many as 50 people attending and more adults.”

1500 Meals Assembled each week

Part of the Monday morning activity at St. Matthew’s is to gather the food that has been rescued from caterers and restaurants over the weekend.

An assembly team of volunteers gathers to put together aluminum meal containers with entrées, vegetables, and potato or pasta. Capper estimates that the 1500 meals which get prepared and sent out each week could be expanded to 4500 meals a week. The estimated cost, mostly for storage and delivery, is \$.98 a meal.

A Model Others Can Use

“It’s a win-win-win for everyone,” says Pastor Manke. “Food that would be wasted is put to use; the ministry partners we have developed in this program are blessed with additional food they can share with the community; and St. Matthew’s is filled with excitement as volunteers step forward to help be part of something that is forward looking.” Manke cast a vision of what that future might look like: an Advisory Board of the various ministries could help their programs be more creative; the meal outreach ministry would be financially self-sustaining; and both Pastor Manke and Chris Capper expressed the hope that this model can be replicated in other communities around the country.

When Eddie Brooks volunteered to pick up the food for Capitol Drive Church he responded, “How can I not help,

with how God has blessed me through all my health issues? In every part of this meal program everyone is giving in some way. And everyone is blessed.”

“I used to worry we would not have enough food,” said Chris Capper with a smile. “I quit worrying and the food kept coming. God is good!”

Wrapped by Joy

When the prepared food arrives from area restaurants it needs to be packed and stored in the large freezers that St. Matthew’s installed for their meal outreach ministry. When the food is all packaged it gets wrapped by Joy with large institutional rolls of plastic wrap.

Joy Craig is employed 25 hours a week by the “Just One More” ministry. She first came to the ministry as a volunteer. But it was clear that Joy had a passion for this gathering of food to be shared with those who need it. After seven months of volunteering she was hired on as staff.



Joy’s sense of calling was partly inspired by what she saw in the volunteers around her from St. Matthew’s, and visiting with the volunteers that came to pick up food for the other churches. That, and encouragement by the program director, Chris Capper, led Joy to become a regular worshipper at All Peoples Church, along with three of her siblings.

Joy’s inspiration has led her to another step. She began a meal ministry in her own neighborhood that shares food with six families. Like Jesus blessing the loaves and fishes to feed 5000, Joy is part of the miraculous work God is doing through St. Matthews and the churches and individuals with whom they partner.

IT'S JUST 'US'

Director's Note – Rev. Jim Bickel

Pastor Steve Wohlfeil said it so simply in just one phrase: "It's not 'them' and 'us'. It's just 'us'." It was Good Friday and Reformation Lutheran Church's annual procession, following the Cross of Christ through the neighborhood surrounding 35th and Garfield in Milwaukee. At each stop Pastor Steve or Pastor Marilyn Miller would conclude the reflection with, "It's not 'them' and 'us'." And the 40 plus people who were on the walk would respond, "...It's just 'us'."

It would be all too easy for us to maintain a distinction that there is a 'them' and an 'us'. After all, we can say there are those who are outside the church and those in. There are those who have all they need financially and those who struggle to pay the bills. There are those who are in the heart of a city and those in a suburb. There are those who are in the group called "people of color" and those called "white" or "European descent."

But Outreach for Hope was created by the Greater Milwaukee Synod to help ensure that we remain connected and that we remain one as a church. We believe that those distinctions are not barriers but blessings for us all and can actually serve to unite us in Christ. I can't emphasize that enough. **We need each other!**



Blessing Habitat for Humanity House

We All Have Something to Bring to the Table

Every church, every individual, every community has something to bring to the table, so that we can all feast together on the goodness of God's love and be a blessing of God to each other. Financial offerings are certainly one important gift that comes to the table. But also, because of ministries like Reformation and many other churches funded by Outreach for Hope, to the table come self-understanding, joy, generosity, healing, unique opportunities to serve, a more meaningful and relevant faith experience, and the opportunity to see God at work in far more people than we would experience if we maintained an 'us' and 'them' attitude.

What do you have to bring to the table? How can you help the church and especially the Greater Milwaukee Synod be 'one'? If you are able, please consider a generous gift to Outreach for Hope to ensure that we continue to strive to be one. *Jesus prayed to his Father, My prayer for all of them is that they will be one, just as you and I are one.*

(John 17: 21 NLT)



Your donation to Outreach for Hope will help support congregations that don't always have the financial strength to fund programs, but have the spiritual understanding to lead the way in following the cross of Christ into the neighborhoods that need to know the transforming love of God.

Thank you for being a supporter of the ministries that are funded by Outreach for Hope.



Pastor Wohlfeil Offering Reflection

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CONGREGATION'S OUTREACH CONNECTS CHURCH AND SCHOOL IN RACINE NEIGHBORHOOD

Big brick and stone buildings can easily intimidate us. On the south side of Racine two such buildings are neighbors. But rather than let the institutional facades be barriers, the people who work and worship in those two buildings have built a splendid relationship over the past twelve years.

One building is Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, a part of the Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA and recipient of funding from Outreach for Hope. The other is an even bigger building, the Mitchell Elementary and Middle School. Two appreciation lunches a year with Mitchell Elementary School and a ministry to support kids that are lacking school supplies, have brought the people of these two institutions together.

Their relationship exemplifies one of Outreach for Hope's mission goals: to fund ministries that are invested in their neighborhoods. This provides a message which demonstrates that God's transforming love is present not just within the walls of the church but also in the community.

'Terrific Tuesdays' Enhanced by School-Church Connection

Mitchell Elementary School is ethnically and economically diverse and reflects the gathering of kids every

Tuesday after school at Church of the Redeemer in Racine. Martes Maravillosos/Terrific Tuesdays brings about 50 kids to the church each week for reading, games, and 'God time' with Pastor Elias Nasari. The relationship that is built with the kids is enhanced by the relationship the church has built with the teachers and staff of Mitchell Elementary School.

Every summer, an additional opportunity to work on joint relationships occurs when many of the Terrific Tuesday students from Mitchell Elementary School participate in Redeemer's five week Neighborhood Camp Ministry. Neighborhood Camp is another ministry funded by Outreach for Hope, and is a collaborative effort of four ELCA congregations in Racine.

Even the Crossing Guards are Invited

Minnie Holz and her sister-in-law, Carolyn Smith, have been organizing the program over many of those dozen or so years. Minnie explained that the relationship began at Church of the Redeemer with a Teacher Appreciation luncheon. It caught on quickly and became a tradition, with as many as 100 staff from Mitchell Elementary School joining in the day as the school year

begins. Everyone from the school is invited: teachers, staff, aides, even the crossing guards.

Along with the luncheons, the congregation also gathers school supplies and backpacks, which they present to the teachers to be distributed to children from low income families who lack school necessities. Scarves, hats, and mittens are included with the supplies. Redeemer member, Dorothy Popadic, spends the whole year knitting so the winter items can be available at the school for those who need them.

Another luncheon is held in the Spring as the teachers and staff get ready to leave for the summer. This time it is held at the school and includes sub sandwiches and dessert labeled, "The best cookie bar in the city".

Minnie stated enthusiastically, "We have built nice relationships with the teachers over the years. We get a big joy out of thanking them." There are wonderful people inside those buildings. Lutheran Church of the Redeemer has made sure they get to know each other.



Pastor Elias at Terrific Tuesdays for 'God Time'



Appreciation Luncheon at Church of the Redeemer, Racine



Mitchell Elementary School, Racine

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\$25,000 CHALLENGE GRANT SET TO INSPIRE RIDERS, DONORS

The 6th Annual Outreach for Hope Family Bike Ride is poised for an even bigger year than the last five. Leading the way is a \$25,000 challenge grant, put together with the commitment of five donors offering \$5000 each to the total.

New Location for the Start and Picnic

This year's ride will begin and end at St. Bruno Catholic Church in Dousman, just blocks from Cory Park where the ride originated from in past years. St. Bruno will provide us with more parking, a gymnasium for the picnic and shelter in case there is inclement weather. And as in the past, riders will head out from St. Bruno onto the family friendly Glacial Drumlin Trail for up to 14 miles, or out into the rolling Kettle Moraine on country roads for an option of a 30 or 40 mile ride.

Many ways to support the ride and the ministries of Outreach for Hope

- **Be a Donor.** All donations to Outreach for Hope this summer will go toward the Bike Ride challenge total.
- **Be a Sponsor.** Learn who is riding from your congregation and offer to sponsor them. Each rider will have their own web page, which will include their goal, and how to sponsor them.
- **Be a Rider.** Sign up to ride and get fellow church members to ride with you. Sign up at outreachforhope.org. Click on the Bike-Ride tab. Add to your support by inviting donors to your personal rider web page, included with your registration.
- **Be a Corporate Promoter.** Get your employer to be a corporate sponsor and make use of the promotional incentives. Contact Pastor Jim Bickel for more information at 414-671-1212.



Outreach for Hope Financial Summary

Allocations

2012 - Dispersed to OFH ministries: \$335,000

2013 - Pledged to OFH ministries: \$350,000

Expense Summary 2012

Administration: \$135,434

Allocations: \$335,000

Gifts and Income 2012

Individuals – general gifts: \$44,304

Congregations and Organizations: \$26,664

Investment Income: \$133,835

Special Events Income 2012

Lent Dollar a Day for Poverty: \$10,354

Family Bike Ride: \$52,406

2012 MINISTRY SITES

All Peoples, Milwaukee

Capitol Drive, Milwaukee

Cross, Milwaukee

Divine Word/Pentecost, Milwaukee

ELCA Urban Outreach Ctr., Kenosha

Emmaus, Racine

Faith/Santa Fe, Milwaukee

Florist Ave, Milwaukee

Grace, Kenosha

Church of the Great Spirit, Milwaukee

Hephatha, Milwaukee

Incarnation, Milwaukee

Neighborhood Camp, Racine

Our Savior's, Milwaukee

Our Savior's, Racine

Peace, Milwaukee

Redeemer, Milwaukee

Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Racine

Reformation, Milwaukee

St Paul's, Milwaukee

Unity, Milwaukee



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The mission of Outreach for Hope is to provide financial support for life-giving ministries that walk with the poor in communities of the Greater Milwaukee Synod - ELCA

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See what one church has done with food to impact the mission of 13 other churches.
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Racine Church Builds Relationship with School Next Door:
What do you do with the big institution that is your neighbor? Invite them to lunch!
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2012

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Thank you!!
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