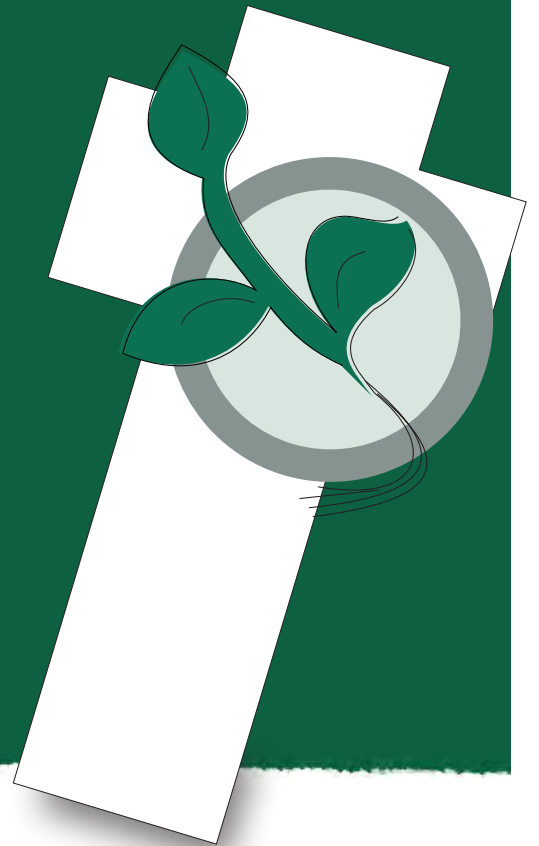


# SEEDS OF hope

a newsletter from Outreach for Hope  
spring 2015 issue 09



## Cross Lutheran: feeding, providing, healing



Servers at the Bread of Healing weekly meal pray together before the work begins.

Wednesdays are busy days for Cross Lutheran Church. A beautiful brick building at 16th and Walnut in Milwaukee, Cross is one of 19 ministries receiving financial support from Outreach for Hope. Many people come to Cross from different surrounding neighborhoods

to spend their Wednesdays joined in a meal and Bible study, and receiving the gifts of the food pantry. There is also a Bread of Healing community clinic providing medical services and dental care in the basement of the church.

Wednesdays are indeed an important day.

### An urgent plea

Started 150 years ago, Cross Lutheran was initially a German-speaking church. As the neighborhood changed, the church began to integrate.

In the mid-1970s, a member of the congregation, Annie Porter came to Cross' paster at the time, Joe Ellwanger, with an urgent plea.

She said, "I see so many people in our neighborhood scuffling for rent money and food. I think we should open a food pantry at Cross." Ellwanger agreed. (*Strength for the Struggle*, pg. 17-18.)

The meal program started with three women cooking

# Cross LUTHERAN Church

at home and serving the food at the church, followed by the addition of a Bible study.

Since then, the meal program and Bible study have grown exponentially. On an average week, Cross Lutheran feeds 200 people. There are five partner congregations who take turns preparing and serving the lunches: Ascension in Waukesha, St. Matthew's in Wauwatosa, Advent in Cedarburg, Christ Our Savior in Sussex and RiverGlen Christian in Waukesha.



By 11:45 the tables are filled with food and people eager to engage in the feast and good conversation. With full bellies it is time to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Participants make their way up the stairs to the church sanctuary for a time of Bible study, reflection and prayer.

The souls that gather are encouraged to voice who or what needs prayers. There is also a time for the participants to share life events. Sometimes the Bible study includes special music (occasionally from the community) or an interactive sermon.

At 1:30 p.m., ready with food, clothes and even toiletries, the Food Pantry opens. Food items are donated to the Pantry from members of the congregation and the partner churches. This service provides people with basic essentials to which they may not otherwise have access.

While the Pantry doors stand open until 3 p.m., there are other doors open to the people who have come for more than just food. In the Bread of Healing Empowerment ministry there are two groups – the Men of Faith and the Women of Faith. These groups

meet to deal with life's stresses by building meaningful community with each other, offering spiritual support and strengthening self-esteem.

## Strength and emotional support

A young man from the neighborhood started coming to the food pantry occasionally. He had no intention of joining the Men of Faith group. One day he waited with the men who had gathered for the support group, not thinking he would benefit from it. But something in the group grabbed his attention.

Since that day he has been drug and alcohol free for four years. He secured a steady job, and stops by occasionally to update the group on his life. This is just one of many stories of people gaining strength and emotional support from the group.

The groups and the ministry at Cross Lutheran provide a safe community to those who may not have experienced healthy community. Many participants have gone through difficult life struggles, grown up in terrible environments or have had no one in their life to encourage them. This is where Cross Lutheran provides strength. A regular guest of the church said, "Lives are being changed. People are being delivered from addictions and hope is being restored."

Cross Lutheran tries to be a ministry that tells everyone they are valued. Those weighed down by a mistake are assured their life is not that mistake. No matter who in their life may view them as a failure, God does not. God believes in them. And so does Cross Lutheran Church.

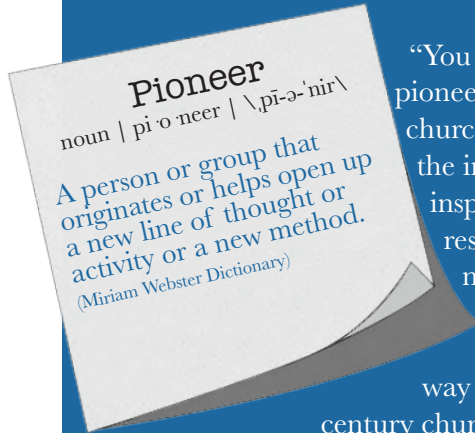
By Sarah Christiaansen, Synod Communicator

Parish Nurse, Linda Radder, leading the Women of Faith group.



# Pioneering spirit exhibited by ministries

## Director's Note



“You are the pioneers of the church! You employ the imagination, inspiration and resourcefulness needed to carry out ministry and lead the way for the 21st century church.” That’s the message I shared with a group of gathered leaders, each from a congregation receiving support due to your gifts to Outreach for Hope.

Yes, that creativity is perhaps present in order to survive in communities faced with the challenges of poverty, which include struggling schools, unemployment, racism and high incarceration rates. But it is also the result of a belief that we in the Christian faith have life-giving hope to impart for those who are challenged with economic, health, and spiritual tests; God is at work bringing transformation through the Church.

### A variety of pioneering endeavors

Here is just a sampling of how the congregations and ministries receiving Outreach for Hope funding are pioneering ministry for their communities and for the greater church:

◆ **Spirit of Peace, Milwaukee** is refurbishing the lower level of its building into a 32 bed Urban Retreat Center, designed to welcome confirmation, youth, and adult groups to experience ministry in an urban setting

◆ **Cross, Hephatha, and Reformation Churches in Milwaukee** together are exploring the establishment of a new congregation within the prison walls of Felmers O. Chaney Correctional Center.

◆ **Reformation, Milwaukee** was weighed down with a large building in need of significant repairs and improved accessibility. They bravely

sold their church building at 2201 N. 35th to find a smaller building to more effectively be a witness in their neighborhood.

◆ **All Peoples, Milwaukee** recently stepped into the worship space of Florist Avenue Church to plant ‘Seeds’ for a new worshipping community and style, which includes gospel, hip hop, testimony and spoken word.

◆ **ELCA Outreach Center, Kenosha** took a leap of faith from a church basement to buying a much larger and more visible former credit union branch building to better serve the community. (see story on p. 7)

### Your gifts are investing in the future

Your gifts to Outreach for Hope support that pioneer spirit as an investment for the future of God’s church throughout the Greater Milwaukee Synod. Outreach for Hope congregations are constantly learning how to:

- ◆ be more creative in developing support that will sustain the church
- ◆ renew buildings from liabilities to assets, in order to enhance ministry to the community
- ◆ team up with businesses, residents, and government leaders to allow accomplishments to expand by working together
- ◆ grow relationships between people from a wide variety of economic and racial backgrounds, and help discover the gifts that each brings to ministry
- ◆ develop leaders for the church through creative youth and inter-generational ministry

Your gifts make you part of that pioneering spirit which is crucial to the future of the church. Your generosity will help the 19 ministries that receive funding from Outreach for Hope to be a blessing to the whole Church, which means you will be blessed as well!

Thank you for your generous gifts throughout the year.



**The Rev. Jim Bickel**  
Executive Director,  
Outreach for Hope

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IN OUTREACH  
FOR HOPE  
MINISTRIES  
WITH A GIFT  
TODAY*

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53215

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Click “Donate Now”

Please call  
our office,  
414-671-1212  
to learn more.  
Thank you.

#### 2014 Financial Statement Available

We are pleased to share the Outreach for Hope, end-of-year financial statement with anyone who may wish to receive it.

Contact Rev. Jim Bickel at jim.bickel@milwaukee-synod.org or call 414-671-1212

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## Major challenge grant inspires 2015 ride goal: \$120,000

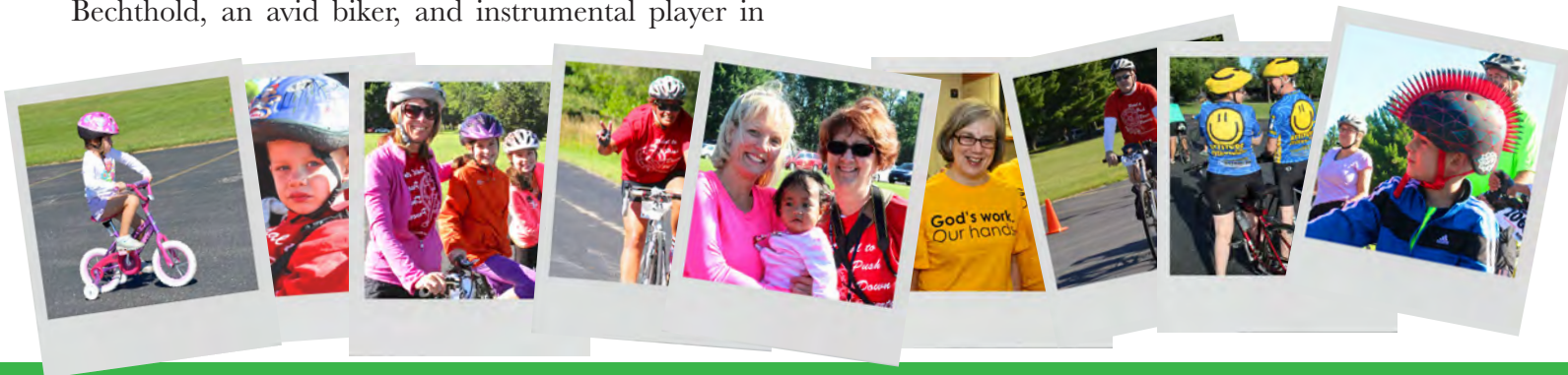
The 20th Anniversary of Outreach for Hope is one good reason that the 2015 Bike Ride Planning Team set the 2015 Ride goal at \$120,000.

But even more compelling was the \$50,000 a group of supporters, headed up by Chris Bauer and Dave Romoser, has committed to raise as a Challenge Grant for the 2015 Ride.

The Challenge Grant will be in memory of Ned Bechthold, an avid biker, and instrumental player in

the formation of Outreach for Hope in 1995. \$30,000 has already been received or pledged to the Challenge Grant.

The Challenge Grant donors hope that many will be inspired to follow their lead in support of Outreach for Hope. They encourage you to donate generously and perhaps even join the ride September 12. To register after June 15 start at [www.outreachforhope.org](http://www.outreachforhope.org).



## PEDDLERS PUSHED FOR NEW RECORDS IN 2014

The 2014 Annual Family Bike Ride proved to be another record breaker. In its 7th year, the 307 registrations far outpaced the 254 that registered in 2013.

Families were a big part of the ride, with a total of 63 families registered altogether. Whole families, in some cases multi-generational, made their

way together along the Glacial-Drumlin Bike Trail. "Pedaling to Push Down Poverty" was the motivation and the tag line featured on the t-shirts.

Another group of riders chose the 30-mile or 50-mile road rides. The ages represented for this endeavor spread from 1 to 84.

The best record breaker of all

was the money raised; a grand total of \$81,343 donated, far exceeded the \$71,831 of 2013.

Thanks to the riders, the 70 volunteers, and the hundreds of people who supported Outreach for Hope funded ministries through the ride.

### 2014 Participating ELCA Congregations

Abiding Savior, Milwaukee · All Peoples, Milwaukee · All Saints, Wales · Ascension, Waukesha · Atonement, Muskego · Bay Shore, Milwaukee · Christ Our Savior, Sussex · Christ the King, Delafield · Christ the King, Port Washington · Christ the Servant, Waukesha · Church of the Resurrection, Pewaukee · Cross, Milwaukee · Dr. Martin Luther, Oconomowoc · ELCA Outreach Center, Kenosha · Faith/Santa Fe, Milwaukee · Fox Point, Milwaukee · Galilee, Pewaukee · Holy Communion, Racine · Kingo, Milwaukee · Lord of Life, Kenosha · Mount Pleasant, Racine · Mt. Hope, West Allis · Mt. Olive Mukwonago · Our Savior's, Hartland · Our Savior's, Milwaukee · Our Savior's, Oconomowoc · Redeemer, Milwaukee · Reformation, Brookfield · St. John's, Brookfield · St. John's, West Milwaukee · St. Luke's, Waukesha · St. Mark's, Waukesha · St. Mary's, Kenosha · St. Matthew's, Wauwatosa · St. Paul's, Milwaukee · St. Paul's, Racine · Vernon, Mukwonago · Village, Milwaukee · Zion, Ashippun

### 2014 Family Bike Ride Total Funds Raised

# \$81,343



# Outreach for Hope celebrates 20

For the past 20 years, Outreach for Hope has been an expression of the Greater Milwaukee Synod's commitment to be a strong and vital presence in communities that are rich in faith, diversity, compassion, and vision, but often have to overcome the challenges of poverty.

The kick-off of the year-long celebration will be a part of this year's Synod Assembly at Carthage College, scheduled for May 29 & 30. The Assembly theme, *Hope for a Broken World: Celebrating 20 Years of Outreach for Hope*, will set the tone for:

- **A noon banquet**, featuring Outreach for Hope, May 29
- **An evening with Green Bay Packer, Eddie Lacy**, May

29, proceeds going to Outreach for Hope. Tickets are open to all. (See the Synod website for details: [www.milwaukee-synod.org](http://www.milwaukee-synod.org))

● **A joyful, celebratory worship** led by individuals from congregations receiving support from Outreach for Hope, on Saturday, May 30, 10:30 a.m. in the Siebert Chapel. All are welcome!

Other anniversary events include the annual Family Bike Ride with a memorial to Ned Bechthold, one of the Outreach for Hope founders, 20th Anniversary Lenten Devotions and, still in the early planning stages, a concluding Celebrative Event in the Spring of 2016.

## ELCA Outreach Center moves to own space

In November 2014, the ELCA Outreach Center moved from the basement of Grace Lutheran Church in Kenosha to its own space, a former credit union building at the corner of 63rd Street and 26th Avenue in Kenosha. The move has greatly enhanced the Center. Executive Director, Karl Erickson, answered questions on the move:

### 1. What is the mission of the Outreach Center?

To share God's love by addressing the needs of children, youth and adults through programs and services that encourage them to become self-sufficient, caring and participating members of the community.

### 2. What prompted the decision for the move?

The Outreach Center was started in 1997 by Grace Lutheran Church. In 2003, the Center became a 501(c)(3) non-profit with their own Board of Directors.

The Center's programs continued to grow and the space at Grace had become too small. After a six year search, even considering construction, the perfect building showed up. A credit union was closing its branch in the neighborhood and we grabbed it.

The credit union left all the furniture, computers (less the hard drives) and office supplies for the Center. The atmosphere is very professional and the clients all appreciate the new building.

### 3. Has the move benefited you?

The move has been a huge blessing. We are able to expand our GED program, have more workshops and a larger clothing closet. We are working with a Boy Scout to build a garden for the clients through his Eagle project. A Girl Scout is building a gazebo as her Gold Project. We also have plans for a prayer labyrinth as well.



Note: the ELCA Outreach Center has been receiving support from Outreach for Hope since 1997.

## HOPE for the Future

### Share the same gift twice!

Do you have an asset you would like to give to your family and also to Outreach for Hope? Using a Charitable Remainder Trust allows you to make your gift to your family over a period of up to 20 years and preserve the value of the asset to make a legacy gift for the benefit of others.

Rev. Larry Westfield, our ELCA Regional Gift Planner, can show you how this powerful tool allows you give a gift once to your family and to give it again to a charity at the end of a designated period of time.

Contact Pastor Larry

262-224-9574 or email at [larry.westfield@elca.org](mailto:larry.westfield@elca.org)



## Congregations and Ministries Funded by Outreach for Hope in 2015

- All Peoples, Milwaukee
- Atonement/Our Savior's, Racine
- Capitol Drive, Milwaukee
- Cross, Milwaukee
- ELCA Outreach Ctr, Kenosha
- Emmaus, Racine
- Faith/Santa Fe, Milwaukee
- Great Spirit, Milwaukee
- Hephatha, Milwaukee
- Incarnation, Milwaukee
- Just One More Ministry, Milwaukee
- Our Savior's, Milwaukee
- Racine Neighborhood Camp
- Redeemer, Milwaukee
- Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Racine
- Reformation, Milwaukee
- St. Paul's, Milwaukee
- Spirit of Peace, Milwaukee
- Unity, Milwaukee



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Why is Neighborhood Minister, Easter Dethrow, smiling? Read about exciting ministries happening at **Cross Lutheran, Milwaukee**.



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Read in the **Director's Note** how Outreach for Hope ministries are the pioneers of the modern church.

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See how many records were shattered at the 2014 OFH **Annual Family Bike Ride**. \$81,343 raised for ministry.



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What can the **ELCA Outreach Center in Kenosha** do with 10,000 square feet of new space after leaving 1500 square feet?