

SEEDS OF HOPE

a Newsletter from Outreach for Hope Inc.

Winter 2010 Issue 01



OUTREACH CHURCHES RESPOND GENEROUSLY TO HAITIAN CATASTROPHE

Adults and Children create ways to bring love offering

The children who gathered in the chancel of Reformation Church at 35th and North on Sunday, Valentines Day, had just heard the Children's Lesson from Minister Marilyn Miller. Marilyn then handed out coffee cans to the kids and announced, "Every Sunday the kids are collecting the pocket change you would like to give for Haiti relief. Make a holy noise when you drop your coins in." The ka-plunks began.

But there were also some moments of holy silence. That's when the one, five, and ten dollar bills were dropped in.

Those acts of generosity exemplified that many times those who themselves have day to day survival challenges are especially sensitive to the plight of others. Often the most generous people are those that have the least. And perhaps that's why the faith of the poor is lifted up in scripture as an

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A Prayer for Haiti

Even as we pray for the alleviation of the present afflictions that the people of Haiti are suffering, we also pray that the seeds for a better future are being sown even now, that those involved in rebuilding and reconstructing this broken nation would be people of wisdom, of integrity, and of good character who desire the good of all Haitian's. Bring about good, Lord, somehow. Lead the resilient people of Haiti forward in hope and with vision. And may we do what we can to help our brothers and sisters in this endeavor. Amen.

*From Sojourners "Verse and Voice"
daily email 1/25/10*

OUTREACH FOR HOPE MINISTRIES NEED YOU

More Than Ever

It can't be ignored, these are not easy times. Layoffs, pay freezes, even pay cuts, and a stock market that took a nose dive have affected nearly everyone to some degree. Outreach for Hope donors are not immune to these problems.

Here's our challenge: those hardships affect our Outreach for Hope (OFH) ministries even more, as the poorest often are asked to disproportionately bear the burden of hard times. Add to that ongoing challenge the seasonal issues of higher utility bills for OFH churches and their members, more illness, the lack of seasonal jobs and costlier transportation. And then there is this annual reality. During December so many wonderful gifts came in. Now in January and February the OFH mailbox is empty nearly every day. That's why Outreach for Hope needs You More Than Ever.

This year Outreach for Hope has set a goal of raising \$300,000 for 24 churches and ministries of our Synod who serve in the poorest areas, providing a warm place to get a meal, the warmth of clothes and other resources shared by the Outreach Churches, and most importantly the warmth of people gathered to praise God. They welcome each other in community gatherings and worship around God's Word, Baptism and Communion. Given the challenges, but more importantly, the tremendous opportunities, my prayer is that this year we not only reach our \$300,000 goal, but we exceed it. That's why we need You More Than Ever.

Outreach for Hope congregations are rising to the challenge and call us to walk with them as they expand their ministries to meet the growing needs.

- ~ **Many of the OFH churches are expanding their meal programs, adding volunteers and feeding more people. Those meals are seeing an increase in the number of children coming for food as well.**
- ~ **Several OFH churches are finding ways to add a Neighborhood Minister, or add hours for the Neighborhood Minister already on staff. The Outreach Minister works alongside the pastor in reaching into the neighborhood with support, guidance, linking to jobs, support groups, and much more.**
- ~ **Two brand new Spanish speaking ministries in Racine and Milwaukee are expanding so quickly they fill their churches on Sundays and they are blest with organizational growing pains.**
- ~ **Baptisms, First Communion and New Member Receptions are happening in at least one of the OFH churches nearly every Sunday.**

The challenges are great. The opportunities for God's church to thrive in the city are even greater. That's why *Outreach for Hope needs You More Than Ever.*

Please make a donation today. Perhaps you might even consider a major gift, or you would like to know more about making Outreach for Hope part of your estate planning. I would be happy to discuss those opportunities with you.

Thank you loyal donors!
We need You More Than Ever.

Blessings to all,
Rev. Jim Bickel
Executive Director



CAPITOL DRIVE LUTHERANS ADOPT A COMMUNITY

The "Sherman Park Gathering Place" Integrates Church Life and Community

Older people, no matter their location or economic circumstances eventually feel concern for their body, their mind, and their soul. As the body shuts down and activity diminishes, one must necessarily wonder "what's next?" The outreach program at Capitol Drive Lutheran Church answers that question and does a lot more. It's called the "Sherman Park Gathering Place."

What began as a twice a week sharing with worship and a meeting at Capitol Drive Lutheran Church (CDLC) for low-income older adults living in the Sherman Park neighborhood, has evolved into a ministry that is truly integrated with the Capitol Drive congregation at large.

Capitol Drive Lutheran Church, through a special ministry for its elderly, low income neighbors, is putting into practice Jesus' call to walk with the poor. Supporting one of the church's strategic goals, to link people and organizations together in order to enhance mutual ministry, the Sherman Park Gathering Place (SPGP) offers the local community residents opportunities for belonging to a caring community with the added dimension of spiritual growth.

Supported in part by Outreach for Hope funds, the Gathering Place members meet Mondays and Wednesdays, year around at Capitol Drive Lutheran Church, for a full morning and afternoon of socializing,

Bible study, and worship and wellness activities. The leadership of the gathering includes the parish nurse, Julie Pekarske, and the church's seminary intern, Christine McNeal.



Loretta Justine has been a Gathering Place member since the

ministry began 10 years ago. She is a witness to its work and importance in responding to God's call to facilitate Christ's mission in the world. She says the group has become her second family.

"It's my lifeblood flowing in my veins, and one of the most wonderful things

that has happened in my life," she said. "No matter what happens on the outside, when you walk in that door, you know God's love and spirit lives here, and you can be at peace and be happy."

Participation among Gathering Place members with the Capitol Drive Lutheran congregation is genuinely reciprocal, and manifested in a myriad of ways. Gathering Place participants have been publicly welcomed as members of the church and are regularly involved in Sunday worship, hospitality and Bible classes. The church's Women's Guild, long a gathering of women all with European descent, some of whom have been Guild members for 45 years, is now a multi-racial organization, thanks to the presence of the Gathering Place.

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Together, the Capitol Drive Lutheran congregation, the pastors and Sherman Park Gathering place members have taken brave and significant steps to understand themselves and their neighbors by tackling tough issues head on, such as racism.

Last spring Loretta was one of three Gathering Place members, along with the parish nurse, a council member and the pastor who joined in on a 6-session, 24-hour program at the YWCA called "Unleashing Racism."

Subsequently, more than one dozen SPGP members and CDLC members and staff participated in anti-racism training. They meet regularly at the church to continue growth in eliminating racism and discrimination. Loretta says that what she learned is invaluable and it has challenged her own ideas about discrimination.

"Don't just assume how another person is going to say or act based on the color of their skin or anything else about them," Loretta said, "You've got

to talk to the person and get to know them first. God made us all individual flowers of all different colors," she added.

Loretta has steadily increased her church participation and watched the church congregation grow in faith and community along with her. "We welcome all new people from the community and embrace them. I love to share with them how truly wonderful it is to be a member," she added.

- Lindsey Bowman

THANK YOU 2009 DONORS

The year 2009 is history, but it's not entirely over until we say "thank you" to each of the many donors who helped plant seeds of Hope through the Outreach for Hope fund. Hundreds of you took the time to provide generous gifts, all helping to bring the presence of Christ into the lives of people loved by God. Hope came to people like Gloria who said she could not have beat her cocaine habit without the strong support of her church community, or Anna, the

single mother of three children, who said that if it wasn't for her church providing a safe and healthy place for her children to feel connected, she is certain they would be in trouble.

In so many ways your generous gifts in 2009 have made the difference in the lives of people who face difficult challenges. But your gifts support much more than ministries of survival. The ministries of Outreach for Hope are also places of opportunity and joy:

music fills the sanctuaries; worshippers are greeted with welcome and acceptance; children hear the Good News of scripture; meals are served; unemployed are connected to jobs, all because of your generosity in 2009.

In the name of Christ, the affirmation of our hope, "**Thank you**".

THINK ABOUT IT. . .

A Quote:

Government support in the fight against poverty is crucial. Yet the year [of travel and observation] taught us never to sit back and rely on such commitments. Our politicians, in the final analysis, will follow our lead, not vice versa.

~ Jeffrey Sachs, from his book, *The End of Poverty*

A Bible Verse:

A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold. The rich and the poor have this in common: the Lord is the maker of them all.

~ Proverbs 22:1-2

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example for all (ref. James 2:5).

But it's not just about being good examples. Reflecting on both sides of Matthew 22:39, "Love your neighbor as you love yourself," a healthy love involves both giving and receiving. All of us, rich and poor alike, seek to live in the spirit of Christ, who gave away himself for us.

In that spirit, here is just a sampling of what some of the other Outreach for Hope congregations have been doing to support the people of Haiti:

St. Pauls, Milwaukee had a Soul Food Sunday on Feb. 28th, collecting a free will offering which will go to ELCA Disaster Relief Fund for Haiti.

Capitol Drive, Milwaukee members have donated \$1,455 for ELCA Disaster Relief to date and intend to invite monthly donations through 2010.



Cross, Milwaukee hopes to raise \$1,000 dollars over the next two months and has already raised \$800 dollars in two recent Sunday services.

Grace, Kenosha has placed a special offering plate out for Haiti Relief with \$240 received so far for Lutheran Disaster Relief. In addition, many are donating through Thrivent matching funds.

Hephatha, Milwaukee has sent over \$3,000 to Lutheran Disaster Relief for Haiti, out of their special fund set aside for major crises. A team of teens and adults went to pack food with KIDS AGAINST HUNGER last week.

Unity, Milwaukee asked members to give through www.htflive.org or on the phone text link. The Unity Women of ELCA along with the Arts Ministry have started to explore projects of putting together health kits or blankets.

At Emmaus, Racine the "after school kids" took time to draw pictures and write about how people are feeling after the earthquake, and how others are helping. Their "Pennies for Peace – Help Haiti" campaign will continue through Lent.



THANKS BOB

A special "Thank you" to Pastor Bob Scheuermann who served as the Interim Director of Outreach for Hope (OFH) during the time of transition. We are grateful for his service as he kept the newsletters coming, spoke on behalf of OFH, thanked our donors, and lifted high the banner of OFH.

He and his wife, Barbara, have been faithful supporters of Outreach since its beginning.

Some of you know Pastor Bob as an interim pastor for churches of our Synod in transition. Pastor Bob is still serving at the Greater Milwaukee Synod. He even got to keep the same

office. He moved on from OFH, to serving as an interim Assistant to the Bishop, first with Interim Bishop David Olson, and now interim with newly elected Bishop Jeff Barrow. Thank you, Bob, for your faithful service to our Lord in the leadership of the church, and for having a heart to walk with the poor.

Ministries supported by Outreach for Hope in 2010

MILWAUKEE-FAR NORTH

Capital Drive Lutheran Church

5229 West Capitol Drive ~ Milwaukee

Divine Word Lutheran Church

5505 South Lloyd Street ~ Milwaukee

Florist Avenue Lutheran Church

5975 North 40th Street ~ Milwaukee

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

3617 North 48th Street ~ Milwaukee

Peace Lutheran Church

5229 North 51st Blvd. ~ Milwaukee

Pentecost Lutheran Church

5226 West Burleigh Street ~ Milwaukee

MILWAUKEE-NEAR NORTH

All Peoples Church

2600 North Second Street ~ Milwaukee

Cross Lutheran Church

1821 North 16th Street ~ Milwaukee

Hephatha Lutheran Church

1720 West Locust Street ~ Milwaukee

Incarnation Lutheran Church

1510 West Keefe Avenue ~ Milwaukee

Redeemer Lutheran Church

631 North 19th Street ~ Milwaukee

Reformation Lutheran Church

2201 North 35th Street ~ Milwaukee

Serenity Inns

2201 North 35th Street ~ Milwaukee

MILWAUKEE-SOUTH

Church of the Great Spirit

3127 South Howell Avenue ~ Milwaukee

Our Saviors Lutheran Church

3022 West Wisconsin Avenue ~ Milwaukee

Saint Paul's Lutheran Church Lau Ministry

2812 West Wisconsin Avenue ~ Milwaukee

Faith/Santa Fe Lutheran Church

1000 South Layton Boulevard ~ Milwaukee

Unity Lutheran Church

1025 East Oklahoma Avenue ~ Milwaukee

RACINE

Emmaus Lutheran Church

1925 Summit Avenue ~ Racine

Racine Neighborhood Camp

1925 Summit Avenue ~ Racine

Our Savior's Lutheran Church

2219 Washington Avenue ~ Racine

Redeemer Lutheran Church

2417 Drexel Avenue ~ Racine

KENOSHA

Grace Lutheran Church

2006 60th Street ~ Kenosha

Lutheran Urban Outreach Center

2006 60th Street ~ Kenosha

WATCH FOR AN UPDATED OFH WEB SITE

Now "Under Construction"
Soon to return, new and improved.
Check it out after March 1.



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The mission of Outreach for Hope, Inc. is to provide financial support to congregation-based Word and Sacrament ministries with the poor in the Greater Milwaukee Synod - ELCA.