

Feed My Sheep John 21:18

A Newsletter of the Hunger Task Force of the Southern Ohio Synod

July-August, 2014

FEEDING COMMUNITY RESTORES LIFE TO FIRST ENGLISH, COLUMBUS

"I'd been there for almost 8 years. When I arrived, there were about 15-20 faithful followers who had done everything they could to offer worship to the community," states Pastor Bob Ward, of his ministry to First English Lutheran Church, Columbus. "We finally decided, after a last wedding, it was time to close the doors and move on. I decided, on that last day, to offer a home cooked breakfast and worship to the people in the surrounding neighborhood. So many came out to that meal, we decided to try something different. We took a leap of faith. We didn't close the doors that day. Instead, we opened them, at first to serve meals, then we found out what else the community needed, and did what we could to provide." Since then, First English is growing as they serve. They now have two worship services, a non-traditional at 8:30 a.m. and a more traditional Lutheran service at 10 a.m., with a home-cooked breakfast in between.



But First English hasn't done it alone. The congregation has enlisted approximately 30 congregational partners who are part of this Eastside ministry. "We couldn't do it without our partners," says Pastor Ward, "and we have gotten grants from the ELCA; a Renewal grant and a Domestic Hunger Grant." Along with these grants and assistance from its ministry partners the congregation now offers programs, not only throughout the week, but through the entire year. For example, every Saturday, **Kids' Camp** is offered for children Pre-K to age 12, from 10:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m., including breakfast and lunch, theater, activities and games, crafts, field trips, and Bible study. **Teen Time**, also from 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m., is devoted to teen activities, including breakfast and lunch, basketball, cheerleading and field trips. AA meets in the church community center at 8 p.m. Thursdays include small group Bible study, and more Kids' time, followed by a Community Dinner from 6-7 p.m. when members from the church and the community gather to get to know one another and join in a home-cooked meal. During the warmer months the church hosts a cookout. The street is blocked off, food and games are offered and more informal acquaintances are made. Vacation Bible School is offered as well. During Holy Week, Halloween, and Christmas, appropriate activities are also scheduled. Ministry Teams plan and oversee each of the events. One of the many benefits is that community members have joined in the planning process and become part of the congregation.



On an application for an ELCA Domestic Hunger Grant in 2011, Sara Neikirk, Congregational President, wrote, "Violence rules the neighborhood of First English Lutheran Church. The police precinct has the highest crime rate in the city. We want to take back our neighborhood." With open arms, significant programs, and an openness to diversity and non-traditional Lutheranism, First English has positioned itself to become a positive force in Columbus in the church's second century of existence. By providing food for both body and soul to the surrounding community, this congregation has fed and led people to come and experience the love of Christ and found new life for itself.

KILTED PASTOR PREACHES AT ELCA OFFICES

Pastor Mike Poole continued his ***Kilted 50 For Charity*** year at ELCA churchwide offices on May 28. After he offered the sermon at worship, explaining his reason for wearing the kilts, the staff, many of whom dressed in kilts, hosted Pastor Mike with an informational gathering over lunch, which included a kilt fashion show by ELCA World Hunger staff.

Pastor Mike explained that the reason he began wearing the kilts to celebrate his 50th birthday was precisely to stand out. The kilts drew attention to him and people would ask him “Why?” This gave him the opportunity to talk about his passion for dealing with hunger, cancer, and telling others about God. “This is what we need to do. We need to stand out so we can draw attention to engage people in conversation and tell them about a loving God, and how the church is responding to His love and working at his command to be a ‘light in the darkness’ to help solve real problems.”



ELCA hunger staff wear kilts with Pastor Mike

On November 4, 2014, Pastor Mike's 50th year will become his 51st. He must decide whether to continue to wear the kilt, or return to his more traditional attire. Wait and see. In the meantime, to hear and view Pastor Mike's inspirational reason for the kilt, visit www.youtube.com and search for 'Stand Out' by Mike Poole.

CLEAN AIR FOR ALL

What does reducing carbon pollution have to do with eliminating poverty and hunger? We know from our ministries that climate change is already contributing to extreme weather events that pose a threat to global agriculture. Also, carbon pollution severely impacts human health, especially that of children, older adults, and vulnerable people living in poverty.



ELCA Advocacy encourages Lutherans to take action now by speaking out in support of the Environmental Protection Agency's proposed rules to reduce carbon pollution from existing power plants in the U.S. Take action now!

Visit the ELCA Advocacy Center at www.elca.org/Our-Work/Publicly-Engaged-Church/Advocacy#sthash.rkKYctvK.dpuf

Hunger Task Force Members: Rev. Henry Zorn, chair, Nicholas Bates; Rev. Glen Bengson; David Drumm; Rev. Joene Herr; Mark Mollenkopf; Rev. Mary Molnar; Rev. Mike Poole; Susan Truchses, editor; Rev. Jeff Wick, synod staff.