



## Out... for the World

Deepening our love for neighbor through service and generosity

Our Feed My Starving Children event was our most successful to date: in five days 6,337 folks helped pack 1,515,024 meals feeding 4,151 starving kids for one year. We raised \$168,000 to cover the cost of the food. 30 residents from Ebenezer and Augustana Regent volunteered; the family shift packed 103,248 meals and the Middle School/Senior High shift packed 128,520 meals.

Over 70 Middle School students gathered on February 11 for Neon Tubing, where 17 guests attended. Senior High students planned and held a blood drive. Through reaching out to their friends, classmates and neighbors, they collected 30 units of blood.

Each week hundreds of folks from several counties come to Mission Outpost to see what the food trucks have brought: produce, dairy, meat, non perishables, bread – a balanced meal that’s not just pasta and rice. Our partners asked us to be more open to doing things differently and the result has been the opportunity to serve 33% more people in our community, over 900 individual families from January through mid-May. We will also research what “justice” looks like for Mission Outpost, providing sustainable solutions.

Mission Outpost partners with about 10 donors who contribute each week. Special projects such as the Boy Scout food drive brought in 12,000 pounds of food and nearly 10,000 pounds of food was collected by the Postal Service. Residents at two senior facilities have also donated clothing, food, furniture, household supplies and medical equipment. We distributed 205,425 pounds of food from June 2011 to May 14, 2012. Due to this outpouring, we received a donation of new sidewalk and loading area to make our work more efficient and safer.

Katie Smith’s story: “Last year, we brought our kids to ServeCity. We spent the morning together doing a service project at church and ended with a tour of Mission Outpost. While we were there, Pat told us that the number one requested item at the food shelf was toilet paper. On the way home, my son was very quiet. At the time, he was nine years old. After we got out of the car, he went up to his room and came down with the money he had been saving for an iPod. He asked if we could buy toilet paper to bring to church on Sunday. A small gesture perhaps, but it meant the world to me.”

109 volunteers moved out into their neighborhood to serve at Echo Park Elementary. During the school’s Read-a-thon, over 1,000 books were donated, blessing over 700 kids. We’ll support the Burnsville school district by engaging in their “Parent Advocacy Facilitation.” We’re motoring along with auto care, partnering with local shops and auto parts dealers. Dental care is a regular fixture, with mobile care on site at least quarterly. Our T-shirt Diaper Ministry donated 27,000 diapers to Lutheran World Relief. We helped build a house in Savage as part of our annual Habitat for Humanity partnership.

13 men travelled to Dominican Republic where they painted rooms at Doulos Discovery School and participated in family life. In June we’ll be sending another team to Tanzania. 10 folks assisted with post-flood rebuilding in Minot, ND, returning again this fall.

We launched our *No Debt! Know Mission!* spring booster with over 850 families participating in the Campaign. We’ve paid off \$2,200,000 in debt. Our fall stewardship emphasis, “Blessed to be a Blessing,” reached 132 families who have never pledged. These families pledged more than 10% over their historical level of giving. The Capital Campaign continues to impact 2012 pledging, with over two-thirds of families choosing not to increase their annual giving. If everyone increased their giving by even a small amount it would make a huge impact on doing God’s work here and around the globe.

The Foundation Board developed a plan to educate various demographic segments of our congregation on opportunities to support Prince of Peace in perpetuity, and created a brochure to describe and incentivize folks to participate in planning for the long term.

We’re praying that God will equip the Prince of Peace community to move UP, IN and OUT in their own lives and among the people and groups they have connection with. As we do this and continue to work with our partners and our local community, together we will help each other **Know Mission**.

## Moving Up, In & Out at Prince of Peace



## Up... with God

Deepening our love for God through inspiring worship and a vibrant devotional life

100 students, grade K-6, in the POP Kids and POP Praise choirs worshiped God through their spring musical “Jailhouse Rock.” 47 preschoolers in the POP Joy Choir presented their spring concert including “Jesus Loves Me” in English, Spanish, German and Chinese. These kids participated in worship several times this winter/spring. They also listened/moved to Classical music pieces and got a chance to play a violin! Kids from our CDLC preschool sang to the congregation in May.

Middle School and Senior High student leadership teams shared their gifts with the congregation when they led worship at the Ash Wednesday service. 74 Senior High students affirmed their baptism and committed to living out their faith through their baptismal promises. 28 families participated in the baptism preparation class. 70 students received first communion following an interactive session about the sacrament.

Spiritual Care Ministry sponsored several new series: Helping a Friend, Deepening Your Prayer and Devotional Life, Spiritual Well-being in a Stressful World, and Living with Chronic Illness. Regular sessions for Grief Support and Depression Support continue to be well attended and a new Navigating Divorce series was offered. We are blessed to have a core group of folks who see spirituality holistically (*see the Wholeness Wheel*).



God’s children in two memory care units can’t remember who the worship leaders are, but they enjoy the sensory worship we provide with familiar hymns, Scripture, communion, stories, prayer and activities; an iPad enhances spiritual care with seniors.

Hearts were prepared for Holy Week through a Lenten Retreat with 101 participants including seniors from Carefree Living, Augustana Regent, Realife, Apple Valley Care Center, and Ebenezer. It takes many volunteers to support those who have difficulty attending services including drivers and shoppers. You’re never too old to learn new things about the Bible and one’s faith! In two senior residences, 36 weekly Bible studies had a total attendance of 801. 24 weekly senior devotions on the theme of the week were written by five seniors.

We’ve shared “God stories” with our congregation in a variety of ways; real-life daily encounters with God at work in the world and in our lives. We learned how to reach “Over the Fence” and plant seeds of faith in their neighbors, friends, and family. During Lent we explored how we can “Restore Relationships” in the pattern that God restores relationships. We watched the last week of Jesus’ life and his crucifixion in our Palm Weekend dramatic production which was also “Worship as a Family Weekend” and welcomed thousands to our site on Easter weekend. We engaged our congregation in a six week discussion of “where are we going” and “how are we going to get there.”

## In... through Community

Deepening our love for our family of faith, especially through small group community

Our Community Meals served over 1,000 people from Lent through May. Next year we’ll serve from September through May, needing more teams to prep and serve. Our pastoral staff led over 200 folks through the Gospel of Luke in the Engage Bible Study, discovering God’s call to share God’s love with the world around us.

Our staff experienced changes in Family Ministry. After six years in Children’s Ministry Audrey Olmstead is retiring, and after eight years in Middle School Ministry Jeff Lexvold has discerned God’s call to a new ministry. Did you know that the average youth minister has tenure of less than two years? We’re grateful for the longevity and faithfulness of our Family Ministry staff! We look forward to seeing what’s in store for Family Ministry as we engage new folks to minister to the hundreds of kids who participate each week. We consistently had 2-3 new students visiting Middle School Ministry weekly and 38 students were re-energized in their faith on the Recharge Retreat.

Women’s and Men’s Ministries play a significant role in our community life together, as well as our ushers, greeters, communion servers, prayer leaders, lay ministers, and our admin staff who input, organize, edit and copy each week to share the good news. Our Men supported Urban Venture’s annual carnival; our Women hosted the Synod Women’s Convention here in April. Again we hosted the annual Synod Assembly here in May, where hundreds of ELCAers convene, participate in conversation and worship together. We presided over 12 weddings, 10 funerals, 29 baptisms (including 3 adults), and welcomed 45 adults and 18 children into our faith family.

Vital Aging Ministry has made 602 contacts with seniors through staff or volunteers via phone or email, and 335 1:1 visits in senior residences, hospitals, transitional care units, hospices or care centers. Folks in senior residences participated monthly in 13 small groups with a total attendance of 134. Seniors and their families gathered to discuss five current aging issues they are facing. Seniors celebrated the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of SALT (Senior Adults Learning Together) with four weeks of religion and humanities classes attended by over 200 participants.

We continue to deepen our understanding of community while living into our Diversity Statement: “Diversity is to respect and appreciate all individual’s experiences. Inclusion is to leverage those experiences by bringing together unique backgrounds to collectively and more effectively address the issues facing our communities.” To improve our ability to discuss tough issues together, we’ll be offering two series of Respectful Conversations this fall and another series from David Lose on “Making Sense of the Cross.”

A young senior was excited to complete her health care directive, choose a funeral home, and take care of other information for her children, along with other 57 seniors. Jody from Moms@Peace: “We decided to try something totally different next year: No speakers, no studies, we’re going to serve. We’ll still meet twice a month, the first time will be serving in Mission Outpost and the second will be out in the community.” Amy from Smart and Simple Finances: “Our family has finally started taking our financial situation seriously. Among other things, we’ve reduced our debt significantly over the last year and are on track to being credit card debt-free this November.”

New member, Erin Dotzel: “I found POP using the internet and came to POP with the mindset, ‘what can this church offer me and my family.’ Our family started with weekly worship on Sunday. Gradually I began to seek out other opportunities for spiritual growth starting with Pastor Jeff’s Engage Bible study. Scripture study has opened my eyes to new perspectives, new friendship, and most of all time dedicated to God. POP staff really cares about each of its members and the needs of their families. They are willing to go the distance to see that your needs are heard, valued and a plan is put into action to solve whatever problem you are facing. This kind of determination and care is invaluable. Now I ask myself each day, ‘how can my family and I give to this church and the surrounding community?’ The truth is that whatever I do to give back it will always be repaid in abundance. That’s God’s humor – it will never add up.”

