

Outreach Opportunities: 2004-2005

The Mission/Outreach Commission of St. Luke's Parish actively served and participated in a variety of ministries during the past year. Vestry participation included liaisons Marietta McPike and David Lukens.

Moveable Feast – This feeding ministry of long standing in the community thrived under the outstanding leadership of Michael Schreyer. A team of parishioners met each Saturday morning to prepare 100 sack lunches to be distributed at the hot-meal soup kitchen at First Presbyterian Church. This ministry goes back over twenty years and provides an opportunity for ongoing service and parish fellowship. It is a solid “staple” amongst our many outreach ministries.

A Sunday morning forum was held in the spring led by Steve Todd, the “Soup-er Saturday” coordinator of First Presbyterian Church. We learned how our efforts fit into the overall mission of this ongoing feeding project in Evanston.

Family Matters – Family Matters, devoted to working with at-risk families in the north of Howard Street neighborhood, has been supported in various ways by St. Luke's for many years. The Rev. Cotton Fite has joined their Board and serves as liaison to the Mission/Outreach Commission. Molly Lovelock has also been active in this ministry. Molly worked on the Family Matters Marathon in the spring and continues to monitor our cooperative efforts. St. Luke's donated gifts of various kinds via the traditional Christmas Wish Tree in the nave, and raised funds through the two Lessons and Carols offerings (half of the net offerings at these services traditionally goes to Family Matters). Several parishioners serve as tutors and volunteers.

Molly Lovelock, who works at Good News Partners, spoke about this group at a forum in the spring. This organization works in the same area as Family Matters, addressing affordable housing issues. The Good News Community Kitchen provides food for area residents in need.

10,000 Villages – Spearheaded by Penny Lukens, St. Luke's is an official church sponsor of 10,000 Villages, an organization which establishes artisan shops to ensure that artists and craftspeople in developing countries receive fair wages for their created wares. St. Luke's parishioners serve as volunteers at the shop at 719 Main Street. Untold numbers of St. Luke's parishioners have performed the important ministry of shopping in the store which has become unbelievably successful (its sales are second only to those of the flagship store in Pennsylvania.)

Greenwood Care – The residents of this long-term-care facility are given the opportunity to worship every Sunday afternoon through the efforts of loyal volunteers led by Rob Tredray and Marcia Lauf. This ministry has been ongoing for over 20 years and is one of the “hidden gems” of our outreach activities.

Pence Jar – Under Rob Tredray, the traditional “pence can” ministry has been transformed into a “pence jar” format, with excellent results. During the past year, Evanston



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Connections for the Homeless and our missionary in Liberia, Martha Lukens, working at Phebe Hospital, have been recipients.

Evanston Ecumenical Action Council – St. Luke's re-instated its membership in EEAC in order to be a participant in this historical coalition for social action in the Evanston Community. Connie Goddard is our representative.

Refugee Ministry – Under the leadership of Tom Robb, refugee and refugee related activities continue.

THOMAS KASSIANO, from the Sudan via Nigeria, arrived in September 2003. He is well employed at Crate and Barrel and is continuing his education. He is awaiting the arrival of his wife from Nigeria, which is a long, tedious, uncertain process.

WILLIAM AND YARTA NAHN arrived in April 2004 from Liberia. We became involved in June. Besides William, the family includes Yarta, mother and wife, Junion, 19, Jared, 15, Emmanuel, 14 and Blessed, 6. The children are involved with school at their appropriate levels. William is working at Good News Community Kitchen. We need to continue to address ongoing issues of schooling, jobs, housing and bringing two additional daughters, ages 23 and 26, to the United States from a refugee camp in Liberia.

VARDGEZ AND MARITA MEGERDICHIAN arrived in Dec. 2001 from Iran. Lovic is selecting a college. Leon is doing well in middle school. Vardgez is a mechanic, and Marita cares for a parish member. All are regular and involved members of St. Luke's.

EDIN RAMOVIC arrived in 2000 as a student from Bosnia. He has been the Outreach Scholar since his arrival, and the parish has supported his education. He completed his degree in Computer Network Management in June, and a festive party was held at the church.

MARICA NIKOLIC arrived in 1996 from Bosnia. She has two children and struggles with severe PTSD. Many St. Luke's parishioners purchase her home-baked bread, which helps her immensely.

Bible Study - A weekly Bible study was begun last year through the Mission/Outreach Commission, focusing on the Gospel of Mark and its peace and justice proclamations. The group continued this past year with a study of Matthew. All parishioners are invited to participate. The Outreach focus continues, with emphasis on how the message of Jesus impacts our lives today.

Fair Trade Coffee – Penny Lukens reports that contact with 10,000 Villages has helped the Commission be aware of the importance of buying only coffee that is fairly traded so the farmers get a decent price for their crop. Under the Commission's guidance, the Vestry of St. Luke's has approved the use fairly traded coffee at all church events. Coffee is ordered from Equal Exchange. Funds are being collected to purchase a new coffee-making system, with over \$700 in hand out of a needed \$1,500.

St. Luke's Bookshelf – This year, under the leadership of Phyllis Robb and Penny Lukens, the St. Luke's Bookshelf was renovated, restocked and reopened. It features a good supply of books, gifts and CDs and has served as the source of books for several classes and forums.



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The “library” to the west of the Bookshelf was cleaned up for display of used books and CDs. It also houses the Cathedral Shelter donation box – a beautiful receptacle made by Selver, our sexton. Revenues are designated for mission/outreach.

Identification and Support of the Ministries of St. Luke's Parishioners – An effort has been initiated by The Rev. Cotton Fite to identify and uplift ministries of the parishioners of St. Luke's. Several of these ministries have been highlighted in the Parish Visitor during the past year.

Martha Lukens – St. Luke's Missionary – In the spring of 2004, Martha Lukens, daughter of David and Penny Lukens, felt the call to go to Liberia as a volunteer to help with rebuilding of Phebe Hospital, the only remaining healthcare facility in Liberia not completely leveled by the civil war. David and Penny and their four children had been missionaries at Cuttington from 1967 – 1974, when Martha was 3 – 10 years old. Martha wanted to be part of the effort to bring healing to the land that had been her home.

In order to travel to Liberia to work there, Martha needed a sending agency. The Director of Phebe Hospital, Dr. Sandoe, sent an official letter requesting her services, and the Vestry of St. Luke's agreed to sponsor her. They sent an official letter identifying St. Luke's as the sending agency. No financial support from the parish was implied. Individual members, however, as well as friends and relations, contributed enough to support Martha in Liberia for six months.

Martha has been living at Phebe and working as Administrative Assistant to Dr. Sandoe. She has also been tutoring students at the Phebe Nursing School, sewing school uniforms for primary students, gardening, and getting to know her neighbors. She has been teaching French to the captain in charge of the Bangladeshi military unit stationed at Phebe.

Now, however, she wants to return to Liberia for a longer term, probably three years, and for this she feels she needs a salaried position. She has accepted the position of Remedial English Teacher at Cuttington College, where her father taught and where several of the present professors are former students of his. She has about 80 students and is having a wonderful time. She is still living at Phebe, but when a house is ready at Cuttington, she will probably move there. A number of St. Luke's members are receiving Martha's newsletters, and excerpts from them are printed in the Parish Visitor. Anyone who wants to be added to her mailing list should speak to David or Penny. The current Pence Jar collection will be given to Martha.

Outreach to the Gay and Lesbian Community – The Commission has been making an effort to proactively identify St. Luke's as a “Welcoming Church.” A statement of inclusion has become part of every Sunday Bulletin. St. Luke's has joined the Coalition of Welcoming Churches, thanks to Michael Schreyer and the Commission. Molly Lovelock is currently St. Luke's representative to the Coalition and attends monthly meetings. This membership has made St. Luke's more visible in the LGBT community. Membership in the Coalition includes listing on their Website, and will include a listing of our Christmas services. St. Luke's is listed as a welcoming church at Gay Christian Online (www.gaychristianonline.org) and gaychurch.org.



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Episcopal Peace Fellowship – After a visit in 2003 from The Rev. Jackie Lyn, Executive Director of the National Episcopal Peace Fellowship centered in Chicago, it was decided to form a sub-chapter at St. Luke's under the leadership of Rob Tredray.

In October, 2004, we invited peace activist Kathy Kelly, of Voices in the Wilderness, to speak at St. Luke's. About 75 people attended from the parish and from various other churches and organizations in the area. Kathy's talk was very moving and inspired many of the attendees, including some of our youth.

We have connected via e-mail to various peace groups in the area, and parishioners have been informed of programs, meetings and rallies. A peace banner was made by Rob Tredray which can be used at peace gatherings and in liturgies.

Cathedral Shelter Christmas Baskets – Nearly a century ago, parishioners at St. Luke's decided to provide Christmas baskets to needy families. This became the Cathedral Shelter Christmas Basket Program, which provides groceries and gifts to more than 1,700 struggling families each year.

At St. Luke's this year, under the leadership of Beth Wright, we sponsored 25 households, including 10 single seniors - 84 people in all. Over 90 boxes of food and wrapped gifts were loaded into the Cathedral Shelter truck on December 3rd. It is estimated that parishioners spent about \$3,500 on this project (none of which shows up in our Outreach accounting).

Cathedral Shelter Clothing Donation Box - This year the Commission engaged Selver to build a strong, attractive box to hold ongoing donations of clothing for the Cathedral Shelter. The box is located in the old "library" just west of the Lee Street Entrance.

As we go forward, let us all remember the role of the Church in service and justice – both included as vows in our baptismal covenant. We must continually strive to effect just living for our fellow human beings, and to serve those who present themselves at our door(s) when justice is not adequate. This is our calling as the hands, feet and heart of the Body of Christ. Let us never forget the great commandment – to love God and our neighbor, and to “go forth” in Christ as bearers and builders of God's Kingdom.

Submitted by
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