



Whatever Can I Do?

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When Is a Quilt more than a Quilt?

Family Promise: Grants at Work



By the Rev. Jane Kropa, pastor, Huff's Union Church, Alburtis, PA

Whenever I read an article featuring congregations that have grand and wonderful-sounding projects, I feel sad inside, and wonder, "What is my congregation doing?"

I imagine other people have had the same thoughts. If a congregation does not have one important mission outreach project, does it mean it is ineffectual, or unfaithful?

Absolutely not!

I wonder if your congregation isn't like my own. When I went through what we do to support those in need, I found, rather than an absence of programs, a great number of little things we do.

No, there is no one grand or large program that we do or support, but, in our own small way, we make a difference through our two denominations: Our Church's Wider Mission in the United Church of Christ, and supporting Synod Benevolence through the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

We also support the Church World Service "Blanket Fund" and "Tools for Hope" projects; we give to four local agencies that supply food and social services to those in need; we support a volunteer agency that provides transportation for people in our rural area by our monetary gifts and providing several volunteers who drive people to appointments. (One of our men drove another parishioner to dialysis for over 19 years.)

We support Habitat for Humanity, and receive eight monthly offerings for special projects within the ELCA and UCC. Before



our annual rummage sale, we send area agencies vouchers for their clients so they might shop free of charge. We collect for four area food pantries and participate in a walk to aid the hungry/homeless yearly.

We support a medical mission to Jamaica. Our youth do highway clean up.

And I'm probably forgetting something somewhere, because many of our members develop a passion for a particular way of helping others, organize a team, and go out and do it, without thinking to mention it to me or the congregation.

In short, while we might never be written up as the church that has one big project we all support, I've discovered we have many small projects, which add up to good things in our local area, our state, and our world.

I hope that when you look at what your congregation is doing, you'll be just as pleasantly surprised by how much your church does, too.

Caring for Our World

On Huff's Harvest Home Sunday, when people bring in produce from their gardens to share with those in need, we asked the attendees what they were doing to help conserve the resources God has given to us. Here is a summary of their answers:

We have been—

Turning off the computer at night

Drinking water from a glass or Nalgene bottle instead of plastic

Taking shorter showers

Putting waste in a compost pile instead of in the garbage

Turning off the water when brushing our teeth

Car pooling

Leaving the air conditioner off

Eating lots of fresh food instead of packaged food

Teaching others how blessed we are to hold our earth in faith

Using dehumidifier water to water our plants

Doing all our errands on one day of the week to conserve gasoline

Recycling more items

Using the dryer less/hanging our laundry outside

Driving less

Turning off lights when not in the room

Using regular dinnerware instead of paper or plastic that gets thrown away

Planted a garden

Using recyclable containers instead of plastic wraps, foil, etc.

Watering plants with our kitchen water

Using our oven for more than one food at a time