



Lifetimes

Tons of Love 2016

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By Lynda Thompson

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In 2015 the Incarnation Faith Community fed their neighbors by bringing 11,830 pounds of food and \$12,230 for Ralph Reeder Food Shelf. More than 8,000 pounds of that food was collected during Incarnation’s July Tons of Love project. Your generosity was an amazing blessing to those families in this community who may often be hungry.

Tons of Love is back this July and once again the big red trailer will be parked outside of Cub Foods on Lexington Ave on Sunday, July 24, when you and your family will have the opportunity to shop and then drop off your donations for the Ralph Reeder Food Shelf. Last year, more than 2 tons of food were donated in five hours. Let’s see if we can beat that record between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. on July 24!

As those of you who have volunteered in the past know, it’s really fun to spend a few hours volunteering by greeting shoppers, selling hot dogs and pop (all proceeds go to the Food Shelf), or adding up the pounds of food as it is donated. If you would like to volunteer for a shift, you can sign up in the Incarnation Office after July 1.

Also stop by the Incarnation Tent at Slice of Shoreview sometime between Friday, July 22 and Sunday, July 24 to drop off a non-perishable food item and receive a free bottle of water! Watch for opportunities to help staff the Incarnation tent!

This year, instead of collecting school supplies for July 31, the Ralph Reeder Food Shelf has asked us to collect weekend backpack/snackpack items that children like. These items are sent home with kids to be sure that they have easily prepared items to eat at home. Things like Macaroni and Cheese Microwavable Cups, Microwavable canned ravioli/spaghettios, 100% juice boxes, granola bars, single serve cold cereal, breakfast bars or biscuits, pudding cups are the types of items to donate.

Suburban poverty rates have increased by as much as 500% over the past five years and food shelf use continues to be at an all-time high. Summer means no school lunches, which puts added stress on families whose budgets are already stressed. If you have children or grandchildren, involve them in buying and donating food and school supplies. It’s not only fun, but they grow up to be generous and to give out of abundance. Generosity is a fruit of the Spirit so bless others as God has blessed you.

From The Staff

Lynda Thompson

Pastor for Missions



Along with your families and friends, you have once again done something amazing on behalf of your neighbors - who as my five-year-old granddaughter recently reminded me, “Your neighbor doesn’t have to live close to you. It can be anyone who lives any place - even far, far away.” You packed over 763,000 meals to feed 2,088 kids for one year. That food has already been shipped to the children in Haiti, Nicaragua, and Guatemala, who will be blessed by this food that not only nourishes their bodies, but lets them know that along with God, someone else is on their side. Did you know that over the past nine years, together we have fed over 13,000 kids for one year? Add that to the more than \$28,000 you donated to the ELCA Hunger Appeal last year. And your generosity didn’t stop there. You also fed our close-by neighbors through the Ralph Reeder Food Shelf by donating almost six tons of food and over \$12,000 in 2015. Add up all of those activities and it equals incredible generosity and support from this Incarnation Faith Community on behalf of the hungry.

In April and May I had the privilege to be part of the Nourishing Hope sessions as we explored the issue of hunger and how Jesus calls us to feed our neighbor. Throughout the series and especially on the last evening, I was reminded that being generous with our time and our intentions is a big part of who we are. We gathered around the cross on the floor that was overflowing with food donations to celebrate Holy Communion. At the foot of the cross was a basket filled with the intentions of people in the group to support those who are hungry in various ways ranging from participating in Incarnation’s 2017 Feed My Starving Children MobilePack™ as a “green shirt” to donating extra fresh produce from the garden to the Ralph Reeder Food Shelf to traveling to Haiti on a mission trip. These intentions were mostly about being generous with the most important commodity that most of us have - our time.

God has so generously blessed us with material resources and with the gift of the days and years of our lives. Jesus has called each of us to use our money, our stuff, our time in support of others. Generosity is a spiritual gift - as the Apostle Paul tells us, it is the fruit of the Spirit. It is the outward sign of Christ’s Spirit living within us. It is our way of telling the world that we reject the lies of our culture - the lies that try to convince us that we have to hold tightly to what is ours because there isn’t enough to go around. At Incarnation, we refuse to buy into the scarcity mentality because we know that our God is a God of abundance. Our generosity is the expression of our awareness that everything we have is a gift from God who is faithful. We will continue to be generous because we trust that God will continue to provide everything we need for our lives.

Here I Am, Lord

By: Kristi Hartman

Kristi traveled to Haiti November 2-9, 2015 with a group of folks from Incarnation to see firsthand how the food that we pack for Feed My Starving Children each year makes a difference in the lives of those who receive it.

“What are you going to do there?” I was asked time and time again when I shared that I would be spending a week in Haiti last November. Our family loves to travel and we’ve spent plenty of vacation time on beaches not all that far from Haiti, but this trip wasn’t going to be a vacation. This was to be my first mission trip, my first time to a third-world country, my first time away from home where I didn’t have any responsibility planning, or any ability to control what I’d be doing. I wasn’t so sure of this idea in fact, but I’d heard God telling me that I needed to be there for over a year at that point. Pastor Gary’s voice was getting louder too, “Are you signed up yet, Kristi? We have a spot just for you.”

I knew one of those spots was just for me - it was heavy on my heart. I had packed food at Feed My Starving Children for over eight years and I wanted so badly to meet children who received these meals. I wanted to look them in the eye and hold them in my arms and see that they were kids, just like mine. But then what would I do with that, seeing that there were kids, lots and lots of them, whose bellies and hearts were hungry? I couldn’t possibly make enough of a difference in one short week to change all of their lives or to change even one of them. And being the type-A person that I am, I couldn’t stand starting something that I was going to have to leave undone. After all, my reputation at our past MobilePacks™ was that of taking over the church’s super-duper double vacuum after the last packing shift to be sure that every grain of rice was cleaned before I could leave. I needed to see our work done to completion. Maybe my friends and family were right - what was I going to be doing there?

Immediately upon arrival I realized that there was no time for thinking like this. I was there to be hands of Christ. I was there as a servant, not to run my own agenda. I prayed for the ability to set aside my tendency to take charge and let Jesus lead me to where I needed to be. That first day at the hospital for sick and dying children, He put beautiful children in my arms, one after another. I held and soothed and prayed for them. I went into a room filled with preschool-aged children and sat down on the floor amongst them. There was one little girl who was set down near me by one of the nuns and she was terribly emaciated. She stood in one place with her eyes barely open, her arms outstretched, mumbling something that I couldn’t understand. But I understood very clearly that she was tired and sick and weak. She was in a place filled with strangers and she didn’t feel well at all. I reached for her to come to me and to rest on my lap, but she wouldn’t come. For at least 20 minutes, I invited her to come to me and to let me hold her but she wouldn’t come. All at once I thought to ask her in French, “Es-tu fatigued, mon amour? Viens ici avec moi. Je veux bien t’aider.” (Are you tired, my love? Come here to me. I want to help you.) As soon as the words had left my mouth, her little face turned to me and she fell into my arms and snuggled into me to rest.

I don’t know why I hadn’t thought to try speaking with her in French sooner. I knew that the local language was Haitian Creole, which is derived from French, but I also knew that children don’t start learning English or French unless they attend school. In that moment, all those years of studying the language made perfect sense to me. It was a gift I had been saving up for this very day, for this very girl, and God made it clear that I was exactly where He wanted me to be.

I didn’t build anything when we were in Haiti that week. I didn’t stitch up any wounds or deliver any babies. I didn’t dig a well or adopt any children. But I did hold kids - lots of them. I got to hug them and laugh with them. I let them feel my smooth hair and look into my blue eyes as I looked into their brown ones. I jumped-rope with them and painted their beautiful faces. I held their hands to play ring-around-the-rosie. I loved them up just the way any kid wants to be loved up. I spoke with them in French and let them guess my age. They were right - 19.

At the Soccer Initiative in Port-au-Prince I got to cut open packages of Feed My Starving Children Manna Pack Rice and help prepare it. Yes - I got to open them! After filling and sealing countless bags over the years, I got to open some, which

was a delight for me. Together we opened an entire box of food and prepared two giant pots of rice that would feed the hungry children who would be arriving after school. These weren’t just any bags of rice though; they were bags that had been packed at our very own church, at Incarnation’s MobilePack™ just six months earlier. I was undoubtedly right where God wanted me that day. Our whole group was. We were blessed beyond belief to be serving as the hands and feet of Jesus and to be witness to His incredible work in this world. Surely this wasn’t a coincidence but rather a way for God to show us that we could make a difference. Our contribution, no matter how small, when combined with those of others, adds up to be something of great significance.

In our short week, we certainly didn’t finish what we’d started in Haiti, but I was okay with it. I was even okay with not being in control of anything at all. It felt good to let go. God worked through me on that trip and continues to work through me now. He called me to come and I’m glad that I let Him take me there. I realized that I need to take more time to be quiet and to listen for His voice, because it’s there. I don’t want to cover up His calling with my own to-do list anymore. I want to practice letting go of the reigns and letting Him work through me. He’s got a much better agenda in mind anyway. In the end, the question that my friends and family should have been asking me was, “What is He going to do with you there?” In fact, He was going to change me forever.

Welcome Kathy Kalsow

Kathy Kalsow has recently joined the Incarnation staff as the new part-time administrator focusing on technology and finances.

Before working at Incarnation, Kathy worked for many years at Hewlett-Packard in positions ranging from software developer to program manager dealing with Warranty, HR and Sales Compensation systems.

Kathy and her husband, Bill have been members of Incarnation since 1997 and have two adult children. Kathy and Bill have been ushers and confirmation leaders. They are currently involved in a couples small group and a rocket small group.

We are excited to have Kathy join the staff with all of the skills and gifts she brings to help us all continue to be the church God calls us to be.

INCARNATION LUTHERAN CHURCH GENERAL FUND - INCOME & EXPENSE REPORT FOR THE MONTH ENDING APRIL, 2016

REVENUE	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	YTD VARIANCE
Member Envelopes/Loose	\$543,483	\$602,926	(\$59,443)
Special Env./Misc.	\$21,964	\$26,695	(\$4,731)
Special Appeals	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Offering	\$565,446	\$629,621	(\$64,175)
Other Income	\$3,455	\$2,891	\$564
Total Income	\$568,902	\$632,512	(\$63,610)

EXPENSES	YTD ACTUAL	YTD BUDGET	YTD VARIANCE
Missions	\$76,036	\$74,867	\$1,170
Salaries/Wages	\$467,148	\$458,333	\$8,815
Ministries	\$31,043	\$35,783	(\$4,740)
Administration	\$17,289	\$24,500	(\$7,211)
Building	\$66,188	\$66,183	\$5
Total Expenses	\$657,706	\$659,667	(\$1,961)
Net Income (loss)	(\$88,804)	(\$27,155)	(\$61,649)

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Beginning of the Month balance	\$183,408
Net Income for the month	\$34,239
Mortgage Payment	(28,540)
Other Capital Expenses	(136)
Monthly Ending Balance	\$188,971

Thank you for supporting the ministries, missions, and programs of Incarnation with your continued contributions. Your gifts are greatly appreciated.

Pray Boldly

By Christianna Shortridge

“Is it okay to pray boldly?” That was a question on Dan Zibell’s mind. The 40-Day Prayer Experiment offered during Lent provided an answer. Yes. God wants us to pray boldly, and this new prayer practice shows the way.

The 40-Day Prayer Experiment was offered at Incarnation during Lent as a way of praying centered on the devotional book *Draw the Circle: The 40-Day Prayer Challenge* by Mark Batterson. About 70 people from Incarnation participated in this prayer discovery that involved reading a daily devotional, spending 15 minutes in prayer and reflection, and checking in with a prayer partner each week. Pastor Jeanne Hartfield held this prayer community together through a Facebook page and weekly emails with new reflection questions and encouragement. The 40-Day Prayer Experiment pulled people out of their comfort zones of traditional prayer through bold prayer - knowing that everything is possible with God and praying in a way you might not have prayed before.

A few prayer life lessons emerged from Incarnation’s 40-day prayer discovery:

Pray With a Prayer Partner: a friend, spouse, a stranger “I’m a prayer fanatic!” said Mary Farquar who signed up with a friend from church. Don and Martie Martin signed up together. “Martie and I talked about doing a devotion together for almost 30 years,” said Don Martin. “This was it, and we did it together. Check it off the list!” Others were matched with people they had never met before with the help of Pastor Hartfield.

Writing It Down Helps: Part of this prayer experience involved journaling. Participants would write down reflections and ideas that came out of prayer to share with their prayer partner at the weekly check in. For Martie Martin, the journaling really helped her focus on prayer. “The journaling made it a success for me, said Martie. “I got that snapshot of my prayer to go back to and remind me.”

The Right Book Can Guide You: Participants found that *Draw the Circle: The 40-Day Prayer Challenge* was the right book at the right time for practices to pray boldly. The book asks people to visualize a circle around you and think about who will appear in your circle as you pray. Mary Farquar found it was interesting to see who would surface in her circle and has applied the prayer circle to her daily life. She found that “it’s made a profound difference in how I view people. My whole day is better, and my attitude is so much better.”

Pray Boldly. It’s Okay.: Bold prayer is new and challenging. “I was always fearful of praying boldly; this experience opened up a whole new way to pray,” noted Dan Zibell. He has learned that there is nothing wrong with praying boldly.” Mary Farquar found that this experience taught her to narrow down her prayer requests and give praise when a prayer was answered. She now knows that acknowledging that your prayer was answered “gives you confidence to pray more boldly.”

What started as trying out a new Lenten practice has stuck around way beyond Easter and is embedded in daily prayer. Pray boldly and discover what happens in your life.

Incarnation Lutheran Church

Worship, Prayer & Among the Congregation

Those hospitalized: Shawna Berg; Don Gustafson.

Sympathy to: Cheryl Hiner and family on the death of her mother; Janny Moses and family on the death of her husband; Jim Johnstone and family on the death of his father; Ed Caillier and family on the death of his mother.

Congratulations to: Jaclynn Deitz and Eric Lampert.

Congratulations to: Taimi and Hans Thomsen on the birth of their daughter, Kaisa Day; Kara and Dan Galvin on the birth of their son, Theo William

Connect & Grow

Butterflying for Fun & Faith

Open your eyes to the wonders of God’s creation by exploring the world of butterflies. Learn the ins and outs of butterflyflying and butterfly gardening and discover how they can be spiritual practices. Led by enthusiasts Joan Myrom and Sam Jurkovic and Pastor Jeanne Hartfield. Please register by Thursday, June 30 in the Incarnation Office.

When: Thursdays, July 7 & 14, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

The Big Picture: Exodus

The book of Exodus is a pivotal part of the Biblical story. Participants will explore this action packed story, its impact on Jesus, and its implications for us as people of faith. Led by Pastor Jeanne Hartfield. Please register by Monday, July 11 in the Incarnation Office.

When: Wednesdays, July 13, 20, & 27, 7 - 8:30 p.m.

Living with Loss, Healing with Hope

How do we navigate times of transition and loss as people of faith? In this interactive session, led by educator and author Ted Bowman, participants will explore a framework for grieving a variety of losses and finding hope. Invite a friend or loved one. Register in the Incarnation Office by Monday, July 18.

When: Thursday, July 21, 1 - 3:00 p.m.

Summer Small Group on Sunday Mornings

Meet and connect with others, while taking a new step in your faith. This small group will watch a variety of faith-based DVD segments, and talk about how the messages connect to daily life. If you’re new to small groups, this is a great starting place. Leader: Grant Rykken. Register: dfloe@incarnationmn.org.

When: Five Sundays, 9:45 - 10:45 a.m., June - August.

Summer Small Group on Tuesday Evenings

Connect with others and talk about how to actively live out your faith. Watch segments from an unconventional video series, where Jon Weese describes how loving people, as God does, is meaningful and fun. Explore themes related to caring about others through the video, *Jesus Prom*. Suggested contribution: \$5. Register: dfloe@incarnationmn.org.

When: Six Tuesdays, 7 - 8:30 p.m., July - August.

Take this Bread Small Group

Read *Take this Bread*, a memoir by Sara Miles, and explore how Christ calls us to feed the hungry, with Lynda Thompson, and others who are passionate about ending the problem of hunger in the world. This group gathers for three sessions, along with an optional service project. Suggested contribution: \$5.

When: Three Tuesdays, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m., July - August.

Children, Youth and Family

Children's Worship Resources

Incarnation invites children to participate in worship. For pre-readers there are "worship Cues" to help young children follow along in worship along with Rainbow Bags and a pre-reader bulletin designed for children. For readers there are activity sheets on clipboards filled with questions engaging them in worship. Along with the clipboards there are SPARK Story Bibles, and a reader bulletin designed for children. All these materials are in one place for easier access. Look for the book shelf located outside the sliding glass doors by the Sanctuary. In Incarnation Hall you will find a worship activity cart, Rainbow Bags, and SPARK Storybook Bibles in the Gathering Space.

Congregational Business

Congregation Invited to Vote on Call

There will be a congregational meeting on Sunday, June 26 immediately following each of the three morning worship services for the purpose of voting on extending a call to a new full-time Associate Pastor. This candidate is unanimously recommended by the Congregation Council and the Call Committee. The candidate's primary focus will be providing pastoral leadership in the area of Children, Youth, and Family Ministry, along with worship leadership and other pastoral duties. The Call Committee and the Congregation Council are excited to present a candidate who is qualified and gifted to continue to move our ministry to Children, Youth and Families forward, as well as help the whole congregation live out our Mission, Vision and Values. If approved, this candidate will join the staff in mid July.

When: Sunday, June 26

Incarnation Lutheran Church Office: 651-484-7213

Web Site: www.incarnationmn.org - If registering online, most major debit and credit cards accepted
If payments are made at the Incarnation Office, Visa and Mastercard are accepted for payment.

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