

Radical Hospitality for Prison Inmates Doing Community Service

The Lancaster County Prison allows some of the inmates serving short sentences an opportunity to leave the prison during the day to do community service with IMPACT Missions, our housing ministry partner. These men offer valuable labor, both skilled and unskilled. They do much of the demolition work on the houses, but IMPACT personnel also train them to do the construction work as well. Inmates work six days a week with IMPACT. The prison gives them a meager bag lunch. IMPACT leaders choose to buy the men additional take-out food every day. The money they spend puts a strain on the small non-profit; it takes away some of the funds which could be used to repair a roof or build an entry ramp for someone in need (IMPACT's core ministry). LUMINA has been reaching out to all the churches in our district, asking that each church adopt a week of the year and provide lunches. Since June 2019, 11 groups have taken a turn at serving the inmates lunch for an entire week. Every group has felt this is a worthwhile ministry. Some of them have shared their thoughts and photos, to publish in this newsletter.



New Groups Needed to Provide Inmates Meals

If God is calling you or your team to this prison ministry, please choose a week and let us know as soon as possible! Please consider these needs as you plan:

- Serve a hearty meal at noon each day Monday thru Friday for one week
- Prepare enough to feed 10 hungry men
- Bring to the work site of the day, most times a house in the city or a site in the county.
- It costs about \$500/week to get the men take-out. Home cooking is much cheaper.
- Remember drinks (and ice in hot weather; hot coffee or cocoa in winter)
- Homemade and home-baked are extra special!
- Don't drop off food and run away! Spend time in conversation with them.
- Bring your crockpot and a small table. The men will carry and set up for you.
- Sample menus and helpful tips will be sent to you.

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New Groups Needed *Continued from page 1*

- Provide a contact person who can text – last minute changes in plans occur often.
- The men have lost some rights and privileges. They are still “in prison” and they are paying their debts to society. Most of them work hard doing physical labor for the housing ministry. They want to do something good. Plan to give them respectful, positive attention and wholesome, delicious food!

Thoughts on the Prison Lunch Ministry

(Borrowed with permission from Greg Impink, pastor of Ironville UMC and Newtown UMC)

I was hungry and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you gave me clothes to wear. I was sick and you took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me. —Jesus (Matthew 25:35-36, CEB)

A few months ago, a church member heard about an opportunity to serve Lancaster County inmates on work



Pastor Greg Impink (left) with two who served inmates meals last summer

release who are rehabbing houses in Lancaster City. Like all other good ideas, this came from a faithful church member, not the pastor. I knew God was answering my prayer to get

involved in this ministry ordained by Jesus himself. Over our time planning and executing, here is what we learned:

These are our neighbors. It's clear that God wants us to love our neighbors. We often see inmates as coming from that bad part of town. We look at our nice communities and thank God that our streets are not filled with criminals. The truth is that these individuals are incarcerated from right in our backyard.

They are no different from you and me. One former inmate, who benefited from the program and is now giving back by volunteering through the organization, reminded us that, “All have sinned,” (Rom 3:23). You would not know these men are inmates if you saw them walking down the street. They are polite, grateful, and willing to help. We show up to serve them, but they pitch in to help set up and clean up from the meal. They care deeply about their families. Every day before lunch, we told them that we would love to pray for them and took requests. Even though their lives were certainly difficult behind bars, they rarely asked for prayer for themselves. Instead, they most consistently asked God to remember their wives, kids, mothers, and fathers.

They are benefitting the community. They are taking

old, rundown homes that have miraculously survived years of neglect under slumlords and turning them into beautiful homes that any family would be blessed to live in. In so doing, they are elevating these neighborhoods.

While they are rehabbing houses, they are rehabbing themselves. Not only are the homes on which they are working undergoing serious transformation, but they are as well. Some men have landed jobs after they have served their time as a result of the trades they learned or simply by way of having a good reference. Some continue to volunteer their time with the organization once they are freed. One graduate of the program remarked, “This time in jail is the best thing that could have happened to me.” God's mercy is demonstrated most clearly when we love those the world deems unlovely. It is no secret that many do not want to help those in prison. The sentiment goes something like this: “They did the crime, so now they're doing the time. Why should I help someone when they have a roof over their head and are being fed even though they did something wrong?” The truth is that this is exactly when God's mercy is on full display. It is easy to love those who have given off the impression of being perfect, those who never seem to do anything wrong. However, God's mercy extends to all, not just some, but all. When we cross over the line and love those in prison, we love as God loves, and we love whom God loves.



Sue Kresge (right) with members of Covenant UMC's serving team

Reflection by Sue Kresge of Covenant UMC

Members of Covenant United Methodist prepared and served lunches to 7–10 people each day during the week of January 19th. The Manifest workers along with Lancaster County work release prisoners were working at a property on South Lime St. The workers had cleared the house of existing plumbing, walls, and most of the electricity. New walls were beginning to take shape to create the stairwell and an added half-bath.

The meals we provided were truly appreciated. Our serving team was delighted to dish up seconds – even some fourths! Our menu for the week included Chili, Mac 'N' Cheese, Turkey-stuffed Sandwiches, Soup, Pizza, and Hamburger Goulash. We also brought fresh fruits or

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Thank you, Friends!

For the tremendous response to our request for donations of quality used clothing to fill our Professional Clothing Bank! We now have plenty of items to offer our visitors. In fact, we are putting a HOLD on any large clothing donations until April.



For the awesome number of brand-new kitchen implements donated to our Super Cupboard ministry by several churches! With these gifts, LUMINA has been able to provide 12-15 different tools to each of our students: measuring cups, mixing bowls, meat thermometers, colanders, spatulas, cutting boards, and more!



Mary Ann Stuckey and Tom Oehme from Lititz UMC

Donated food, toys and kitchen tools

Reflection by Sue Kresge *Continued from page 2*

freshly baked cookies every day. We did have some good conversations as we got to know the workers during the week. As we were arriving on Friday, I heard a voice calling, “Grandma, hey, Grandma!” It was one of the guys – probably in his 20s – and he came running from across the street to take the tray of cookies out of my hands. He said, “I hope you don’t care if I call you Grandma. I miss my Grandma.” We are looking forward to preparing lunches for another group of workers during the first week of May. We plant the seeds and God nourishes!

For the generous donations of toys and household items for our children and their families! Over thirty children attended the Christmas party hosted by New Creation and Millersville Community UMCs. They chose gifts to give every member of their families. And each child in our Kids Night program gets to choose a birthday present on their special day!



Loaded down with gifts for mom, grandma, and six brothers and sisters!

For the thoughtful gifts of warmth and comfort! Cozy, colorful socks, mittens, scarves, and hats were distributed to our children and their families, thanks to several generous donors!



Loving his new Batman hat and mittens!

For supporting our Community Day Camp’s mission project and helping us to send \$500 in vitamins and medicines for the Rev. Dorcas Kamanda and the children in Sierra Leone!





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Inside This Issue

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 - LUMINA Italian Night Fundraiser Dinner May 1st
- ...and MORE!

LUMINA's New Transportation Ministry Needs Drivers

Through the ExtraOrdinary Give event, LUMINA received over \$16,000 in donations! We plan to purchase a used 15-passenger van this spring. This will kick off our new transportation ministry! Many of our neighbors in need do not have the transportation to get to our programs and services. We are seeking licensed drivers (no CDL necessary) with a clean driving record and PA criminal and child abuse clearances to serve on our



transportation team. Drivers will be matched with days and times which suit them best. Possible times of service include:


- Monday evenings – driving children to and from Kids Night
- Weekday mornings – driving inmates from the prison to the IMPACT/Manifest work site
- Weekday mornings – driving moms and dads to Super Cupboard classes
- Weekends – driving children to special events and field trips

Please contact Correen today if interested: Correen.lumina@gmail.com

See the newsletter insert for a special event coming on May 1st to raise funds for our van and the new transportation ministry!

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You can reach LUMINA with your requests, donations, suggestions or other information by contacting:

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