

**First United Methodist Church Community Outreach
October 6, 2010**

We are continuing to reach out to our neighbors by opening our doors to the Family Life Center each Tuesday, beginning at 11:00 a.m. Guests are welcomed, served a meal, and interviewed. Each one has opportunity to share his/her pain, sorrows and joys, as well as needs. As Jim Kuse has observed, many have prayer with several people before leaving.

Many heart warming stories surface during these Tuesdays. Here is a glimpse.

T.K. is alone, divorced years ago. Always self-sufficient, she has in the past used her resources to bless others. With a major setback through surgery six months ago, and another looming physical ailment, she is unable to work. Embarrassed, she seeks assistance. We help, and suggest other resources. She weeps in her gratitude.

One of our ladies who helps with food and fellowship sat at a table with a sad woman. As they share stories, the woman laughs, then admits that it has been a long time since she laughed. It is a special moment for both ladies.

Bob Evans gift cards bring smiles to faces and tears flow as encouragement and minor needs are met. Numerous ones thank us for the love they feel when they enter our building. They are overwhelmed with the kindness and warmth extended to them.

Putting our faith to work, we pray with each one, encouraging them to walk closely with the Lord and commit to a local church. Information of available community resources addressing particular needs is provided. Most of the financial help we provide involves gas vouchers and some assistance with small, but critical expenses. We kept a few single moms from losing power in their homes, and one young mother and her children from being evicted. We helped several homeless with temporary shelter.

We helped one daughter move out of the house with her mother, who has early signs of Alzheimer's disease, and is unstable. Consequently, this daughter has now been able to get her mother engaged in medical help needed. This is a good reminder that the help we extend doesn't stop with that person; it ripples out in other directions.

As a result of this ministry, lives are touched and men and women express a desire to connect to a local church. Some attend our services and others plug into other churches.

Thank you for giving. In Luke 10:25-37, Jesus is asked, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus portrays the neighbor as a stranger who is homeless, robbed, beaten, stripped, and left for dead." The Samaritan has compassion. He tends the man's wounds, takes him to a safe place, cares for him, and pays for further care. Then Jesus puts a new spin on "neighbor." He asks, "So, which of these three do you think is neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" The lawyer responds, "He who showed mercy on him." Jesus answers, "Go and do likewise."

And that, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, is what I believe Jesus is saying to us individually and as the body of Christ corporately, "Go and do likewise."