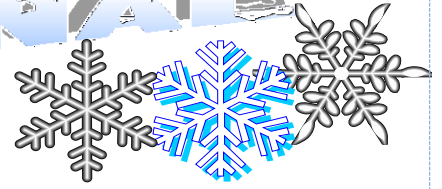


SMOKE

SIGNAL



Our Mission Statement:

Sharing the love of Christ with All people

Burnt Factory United Methodist Church

1943 Jordan Springs Road
Stephenson, Virginia 22656
C. Steven Melester, Pastor

January, 2021

Church Newsletter

*"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven."
- Matthew 5:16*

♪ **Our Pastor's Musical Message for January 2021** ♪

In light of the challenges of 2020, I thought I would remind everyone, in song, that God is good all the time and all the time, God is good! I think Eugene M. Bartlett, in 1939, said it better than I ever could. Let this be a reminder to all of us, that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord and no matter what this old world can throw at us, we have Jesus!

♪ *"I heard an old, old story, how a Savior came in glory, how he gave his life on Calvary to save a wretch like me; I heard about his groaning, of his precious blood's atoning, then I repented of my sin and won the victory!"*

♪ *I heard about his healing, of his cleansing power revealing, how he made the lame to walk again and caused the blind to see; and then I cried, Dear Jesus, come and heal my broken spirit and somehow Jesus came and brought to me the victory!*

♪ *I heard about a mansion he has built for me in glory, and I heard about the streets of gold beyond the crystal sea; about the angels singing and the old redemption story, and some sweet day I'll sing up there the song of victory!*

♪ *O victory in Jesus, my Savior forever! He sought me and bought me with his redeeming blood; he loved me ere I knew him and all my love is due him; he plunged me to victory beneath the cleansing flood!"*

Happy New Year Church and we will be back together soon and when we are, when this virus has been defeated, and it will! We will sing this song first!

The battle belongs to the Lord! It always has and it always will! God bless and grace and peace to all God's children!

Pastor Steve

January BIRTHDAYS

- 1st Keith Roberts
2nd Iris Sibert
3rd Mason Smith
4th Noah Swimley
Ed Ward
5th Karen Lynch
David Wales
Dick Carter
8th Jacob Taylor
Derek Bursey
11th Jean Wilson
Magnolia Murphy
13th Bill Shope
Kenny Rohrbach
15th Harrison Fair
Jimmy Grayson
21st Stephanie Britton
22nd Jay Powell
24th Lilly Reed
25th Hayden Earhart
26th Scott Snyder
27th Ron Baker
Anne Bromley
28th Sharon Clark
29th Gary Jenkins
Jerry Swunket
Harper Davis
30th Gail Winter
Audrey Sutphin
31st Jackie Livengood
Jason Wiseman

January ANNIVERSARIES

- 5th Tim & Danette Heinlein
12th Roger & Kathy Feight
29th Norbert & Donna Bonjo

Grief Support Group Begins

January 16

Pastor Steve will be offering a Grief Support Group that is starting on January 16 and running for 8 weeks, concluding on March 6. We will meet on Saturday mornings from 9:30 till 10:30 in the Sanctuary. Study book will be furnished. All safety protocols will be in place. Space is limited so let Pastor Steve know if you are interested ASAP. God bless you and may our Lord grant you peace and comfort.

ARTICLE DEADLINE FOR FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER

Again this month as a "Friendly Reminder" for those who regularly send me their articles and for anyone who may have an article for the **February** newsletter, I will be needing your articles by.....

3:00pm on Wednesday, January 27th.

I will be sending the newsletter on

Friday, January 29th.

Thanks, Charly

Have you given your email address to Keith Roberts, yet?



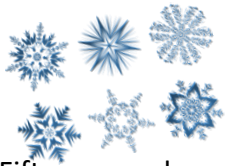
Pastor Steve has special notices he needs to send to those who attend Burnt Factory.

The notices will include not only prayer concerns, but also schedule changes during bad weather.

Keith keeps an email list in his computer for just such purposes. Your email address is protected and emails are sent, recipients not disclosed, to protect your privacy.

Kindly send your email address to Keith Roberts at john.k.roberts@comcast.net with the message:

"ADD ME TO THE CHURCH EMAIL LIST"



UNITED METHODIST WOMEN



JANUARY 2021

Fifteen members met December 10, 2020 in the sanctuary for our third and last meeting of 2020.

Unfortunately, the three other scheduled meetings didn't happen. It was good to gather with those who were able to attend. We welcomed everyone, had prayer, recited THE PURPOSE, thanked Jani for sending cards in our name to those who are shut-in and also our district prayer partner, Market Street UMW.

New officers were elected for our unit next year. Most positions stayed the same with a couple of changes. Thanks to those who are always willing to make our unit outstanding in the district. We strive to carry out the mission to share God's love near and far.

The 2021 officers are as follows: President, Polly Duvall; VP, Donna Gallagher; Secretary, Diana Smith; Treasurer, Anne Perrault; Spiritual Growth Coordinator, Doris Duvall; Social Action Coordinator, Ann Kackley; Education & Interpretation Coordinator, Jani Shope; Membership, Nurture & Outreach, Jani Shope; Program Resources, Doris Duvall; Prayer Partner Coordinator, Kathy Dixon.

Anne Perrault, our treasurer, gave her report and in spite of low funds, we decided to go out in faith and give \$150 to each of the following organizations: Laurel center, CCAP, Evans Home, ARC, Abba, and Special Love.

We were glad that we were able to give generously to a Welcome Home Basket to someone transitioning at The Laurel Center. Penny Croll had worked with Lisa Patterson to form a list that would be helpful to someone leaving The Laurel Center. All the suggested items were brought in and some items duplicated! Donna Gallagher and Penny delivered this gift and we pray it will bless several women and children as they begin a new path of freedom from domestic violence and homelessness. This was our third year of providing this gift.

Penny also gave a report on how Project Esperanza is coping with COVID. They are the only school in Puerto Plata that has been receiving kids all year. They are taking all the precautions and following protocol to keep the kids and teachers safe.

Our unit was asked to host the UMW Executive Committee meeting of about 20-25 members on Sunday, January 10, 2021 from 2-5 p.m. This was planned back in August. But since our December meeting, it looks like it may be a zoom meeting, so we won't be asked to provide the setting.

The Kits for Conference are still in our storage area and most likely will stay there until summer when more may be added to them. We have more supplies we bought during sale time in August and will work on those before conference time next summer.

Thanks to Kathy Dixon for organizing our prayer partners. Current ones were revealed and new ones chosen. It's very comforting to know someone is praying for you on a regular basis. Recognizing special days of the year, along with birthdays and anniversaries, are thoughtful gestures, too!

Thanks, Gwen Callahan, for providing hand crafted items for a give-away! She was very generous with several items.

Missionary names from the Prayer Calendar were shared along with a little candy bible, candy cane, and a reading "What to do this Christmas." The missionary's birthdate is listed. They would appreciate an e-mail! Sometimes they respond back!

Our next meeting of the new year is set for February 18th. Let's continue to pray for healing in our land. While we are praying for better times, we want to thank God each day for the many blessings he provides!! God bless each of you, stay safe and healthy, and be the kindness you want to see in others!

Blessings, Polly Duvall, president

January 2021



Relay for Life

At Relay for Life, no donation is too small. Each and every dollar counts. Your donations help fund groundbreaking cancer research, patient care programs and can make a difference in communities like ours. With every donation, you are helping the American Cancer Society save lives. Please feel free to send any donations that you wish for The Believers to the church mailbox.



This announcement came out too late in December so Lisa and I decided to postpone the workshop to learn how to make one of these blankets. If you are interested in learning how to make a beautiful warm chunky blanket while supporting our Believers Relay for Life team, please call or message Lisa at (540) 664-4169 or me at (540) 247-5612. We have not set a new date, but want to make sure that you are aware of this great opportunity for socially distanced fellowship.

The cost of the workshop (you supply the yarn) is \$25.00. Lisa will teach us all the steps we need to make a warm and cozy blanket and all of the proceeds will go to our team. Make sure that you get 8 oz. chunky yarn (make sure it's 8 oz. chunky yarn and at least 28 yards). You will need 6 skeins to make a 40 x 50" blanket. Please make sure to let one of us know if you are interested and we will definitely let you know when we re-schedule the workshop.

If you haven't joined our team yet, you can go online to secure.acsevents.org and register to become a Believer team member. Choose the Winchester/Frederick County event and the Believers team. It's so easy and it doesn't cost anything to join.

Check out [The Believers](#) Facebook page for updates.

Stock up on bags of **Dum-Dum lollipops** if you can so that once we start having Relay for Life team captain meetings Lisa and I have them to take with us. The Dum-Dums are for Cancer patients while they are being treated.

Our mission is to save lives, celebrate lives, and lead the fight for a world without cancer.

We thank you for your support!

Theresa Gilbert and Lisa Patterson, Co-Captains

Faith Community Nurse Article

January 2021

2020 was a stressful year. The illness, death, anxiety, fear, uncertainty and isolation associated with COVID 19, and the social unrest across the country have all been major contributing factors. Jesus tells us in **John 16:13** "Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world." When we believe and practice the key truths found in scripture, we can experience God's peace instead of anxiety and other negative and harmful emotions.

Life can feel like a wilderness - too big, not enough resources, isolated, far away from where we want to be. Our pandemic experience certainly magnifies this sensation; yet even there the good news reaches us that God is coming and for that I am truly grateful.

Unfortunately, the pandemic continues. But, what if in 2021 we focus on the things we are grateful for when our stress starts to overwhelm us. The simple act of saying or hearing "thank you" can make you feel happier, more helpful and less alone.

When you express or embrace gratitude, feel-good neurotransmitters like dopamine, oxytocin and serotonin are released by the brain, and that leads to both emotional and physical rewards, including

- A more positive attitude
- Better sleep
- Reduced levels of stress and depression
- Improved relationships
- Greater resiliency and self-esteem
- Lower blood pressure

To truly experience and enjoy a habit of acknowledging others, you can also

- Write thoughtful notes
- Set aside one-on-one time for friends
- Meditate
- Volunteer
- Keep a journal

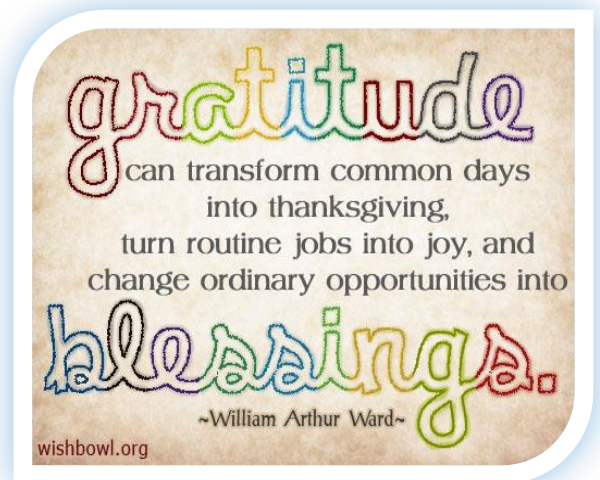
Even remembering to count your blessings can change your outlook on life and the impact you have on those around you. The thing about being appreciative and appreciated...it's contagious. When you choose gratitude, you're spreading the message of kindness, respect and giving.

Wishing you an abundantly, healthy, blessed new year!!!

Theresa

You can reach me at any time by e-mail at tgilbert@afpdocs.com or theresahgilbert@gmail.com or by phone at (540) 247-5612.

As your Faith Community Nurse, I am here to serve as a bridge to better health, meeting the wholistic healing mission of the church by partnering with the Pastor as a healer of the spirit, mind and body.





Hearts of Grace
Caregiver Support Group
Contact: Debbie Walker
Email: dswalker1@yahoo.com
(540)664-0908 Cell / (540)667-6711 Home
Monthly/Second Tuesday @ 7:00

Top Ten Things Caregivers To Start Doing for The New Year

- 1. Keep records of all medications and reactions: make notes about what works, what doesn't and when you informed the physician of any problems.**
- 2. Keep records of all doctor appointments: the reason for the visit, the doctor's responses to your concerns, any procedures performed, etc.**
- 3. Plan for the unexpected: discuss plans and wishes of everyone involved in the caregiving family. Talk about final resting places and what arrangements your family want.**
- 4. Have an Advance Directive filled out and given to the primary physician and all relatives who may need the form.**
- 5. Have a Last Will and Testament completed or updated: without a signed Will, the courts will decide how to distribute the possessions of your loved ones. This should be done while your family member is still able to explain to you their wishes and understands what they are signing and agreeing to.**
- 6. Record all monetary involvements: investments, resources creditors, debtors, business transactions, etc.**
- 7. Have an insurance analysis done: is your home, life and health insurance still appropriate for your family's needs? What about the insurance policies of your loved ones? Do you all have enough coverage to take care of any eventuality? Do you have provisions for Long Term Care? For respite care? Is your house adequately covered given the state of the weather patterns?**
- 8. Clean out the medicine chest. Look for expiration dates on all medicine, and check with your doctor about previous medications which will either be harmful with current prescriptions or which are no longer effective for your loved one. Not only will you save space, you might also save a life.**

Next meeting will be: Tuesday, January 12th, 2021 7:00 pm Fellowship Hall.

Wishing each of you peace, love and joy,

Debbie

Dear Church Family,

This past year has definitely taught me that there are many things I can do without. But the far greater lessons I have learned are the things I definitely **can't** do without. Most importantly, Jesus.

There have been great heartbreaks, sadness and isolation throughout this Pandemic, and the only thing that has been a constant is the Love, mercy and peace of Jesus. Second, my Church Family. I have never experienced people who go to such great lengths to keep ministries, services, and encouragement flowing during a time of such depletion, fear and hopelessness. I will say that I lost my way in the discouragement of having to cancel VBS, Summer Camp, Winter Retreat, Mission Trips, etc. But I rallied in the last half of the year because of the encouragement, renewal, and uplifting ways of the people of Burnt Factory. Prayer Warriors, Generous Givers, Card Ministers, Text Messengers, Servant Leaders; you wonderful and amazing Godly people have made it all possible for the staff to do what we love and are called to do. My heart sings because you are all beautiful souls. My family and I can't thank you all enough for all you have done for us. We will continue to rally, minister, lead, be creative and bring all the best we have to bring Glory to God, to worship with each of you, and serve in the Community. Here's to 2021!!!

Love: Carrie Fair

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES



Children's Ministries: Draw your favorite Bible story. Make it awesome because the church members will vote on them! Prizes bags will be granted!!

Categories: most colorful, most creative, most inspirational, most original, Pastors Favorite, Staff Favorite and much more. We will hold a little awards ceremony later.

Ages 2-4**Might need parental assistance!!

Ages 5-7

Ages 7-11

Rules:

Take your time and learn about your Bible story and include the unique details. Take your time!! It is not due until January 31. If you need help or would like to talk about your Bible story you can call, zoom, Facetime, etc. I'm always here for you!

There will be monthly activities/Sunday School Material sent out to families to do at home together.

On February 14 from 1-4 in the church parking lot. We will do a "Lent in a Box" pick up for families to come pick up activities for families to do during Lent. February 17 is the first day of the Lenten season leading up toward Easter. Please feel free to come by at any time between 1 and 4pm to pick up a box for your family.

*Carrie Fair, Director of
Children's Ministries*



We will be beginning a Read through the Gospels together study. January-February we will dive into Matthew. The schedule is set up for you Youth to read a daily chapter, write notes, and at the end of the week we will zoom chat to do Q and A, catch up and discuss our notes. I will post the weekly readings on Facebook, email to your parents, and I will hopefully soon mail out packets to each of you that wish to participate. Please let me know ASAP if you wish to participate.

Week One Begins January 10th

Youth Bible Reading Program. January-February ---The Gospel of Matthew

*Take time to journal any reactions, thoughts, questions, etc. to discuss on Zoom.

Sunday, Jan 10th-----Read Chapter One
Jan 11th-----Read Chapter Two
Jan 12th-----Read Chapter Three
Jan 13th-----Read Chapter Four
Jan 14th-----Read Chapter Five
Jan 15th-----Zoom Call 7pm for chat time, Q & A, and discussion----*subject to change.
Jan 16th-----Rest

Sunday, Jan 17th-----Read Chapter Six
Jan 18th-----Read Chapter Seven
Jan 19th-----Read Chapter Eight
Jan 20th-----Read Chapter Nine
Jan 21st----- Read Chapter Ten
Jan 22nd-----Zoom Call 7pm for chat time, Q&A, and discussion
Jan 23rd-----Rest

Sunday, Jan 24th-----Read Chapter Eleven
Jan 25th-----Read Chapter Twelve
Jan 26th-----Read Chapter Thirteen
Jan 27th-----Read Chapter Fourteen
Jan 28th-----Read Chapter Fifteen
Jan 29th-----Zoom Call 7pm for chat time, Q&A, and discussion
Jan 30th-----Rest

Carrie Fair, Director of Youth Ministries



TO BEGIN THE NEW YEAR RIGHT,
HERE ARE BUDDY'S JOKES FOR JANUARY 2021



What is the best way to get in contact with a fish?
Drop it a line!



A Fish Story from Buddy from years gone by:

When I was young Opequon Creek was by our farm and we used to go fishing in the creek.

The fish were so big they had to go all the way to the Potomac River to turn around!

The other day I got a ticket for being parked illegally and I have no idea why because the sign clearly read

FINE FOR PARKING !

I used to be a member of a Cooking Society, but they kicked me out for spilling the beans!



Do you know the 1st French Fries weren't actually cooked in France?

They were cooked in "Greece!"



The above jokes were given to me, but Dave wanted to talk with Buddy, soooooooooooooooooo... as Dave and Buddy were sitting in their recliners and talking on the phone Buddy just happened to mention that "Me and my recliner go **W--A--Y BACK!**"

NOW THAT I'M
OLDER, I CAN
ADMIT THAT...

My goal for 2020 was to lose 10 pounds. Only have 14 to go!

Ate salad for dinner. Mostly croutons and tomatoes. Really just one big round crouton covered with tomato sauce, and cheese. FINE, it was a pizza...OK, I ate a pizza! Are you happy now?

I just did a week's worth of cardio after walking into a spider web!

I don't mean to brag, but I finished my 14-day diet food supply in 3 hours and 20 minutes!

A recent study has found women who carry a little extra weight live longer than men who only mention it!

Kids today don't know how easy they have it. When I was young, I had to walk 9 feet through shag carpet to change the TV channel!

Senility has been a smooth transition for me!

Remember back when we were kids and every time it was below zero outside they closed school? Yeah, Me neither!

I love approaching 80! I learn something new every day and forget 5 other things!

Submitted by Sue Swimley (not necessarily pertaining to her.)





Outreach Summary for 2020



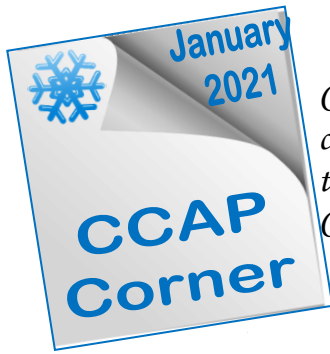
As we look back over the Outreach Projects of 2020, we rejoice and thank God for the many ways that Burnt Factory has been present in the community and beyond. It has been a challenging year for so many in our community -- illness, loss of income, food insecurity, virtual learning, depression – and in response, our Outreach team worked with your generous giving so that we could share your blessings with those struggling. We followed the Bishop’s direction on volunteering and the procedures on social distancing and wearing masks so that we could return to volunteering in the community. Here is a list of some of the areas that you have been the hands and feet of Christ:

- Highland Food Pantry received a monetary donation of \$500.
- Outreach worked with the Faithseekers Sunday School class to provide Fremont Street Nursery with 15 weekend bags of food, when they were open. (Fremont closed for COVID March 20-June 8.) Outreach also worked with the Faithseekers to provide Fremont with non-perishable items for 30 Thanksgiving baskets and 30 Christmas baskets.
- WATTS was provided supplies and volunteers to prepare dinner off-site and to serve those meals to the homeless men and women sheltering at First UMC during our week following Thanksgiving.
- \$1500 annual donation to WATTS and additional \$200 to WATTS warming shelter at Market Street UMC
- \$500 donation to Greenwood Mill Elementary - Bright Futures (We were unable to provide volunteers.)
- Collection of school supplies for Bright Futures “Stuff the Bus” in August – value +\$650
- \$1000 donation to the Salvation Army to help with the increase need for meals and for the December Red Kettle collection. (We were unable to provide bell ringers this year.) We also shared our food pantry items.
- 11 Christmas meals for Social Services
- Collections in February and October for Laurel Center – value +\$900
- Collection in July of snacks and cleaning supplies for Evans Home for Children – value +\$600
- CCAP--
 - Lunches served the third Sunday of each month to an avg. of 44 guests
 - Collected 23 Easter baskets – value +\$325 (CCAP closed, donated to UMM for Fremont Street Nursery)
 - 32 complete Thanksgiving dinners - value +\$950
 - Various underclothing items collected in January - value +\$500
 - Diapers collected in June - value +\$700
 - Blankets and diapers collected during Thanksgiving week - value +\$1000
 - \$3000 annual donation
- \$2250 annual donation to Project Esperanza in the Dominican Republic plus additional \$1000 from designated mission funds to cover the cancellation of the Roast Beef Dinner fundraiser
- \$350 contribution to help save Colegio Costambar from closing (A high school used by Project Esperanza.)
- Relay for Life event was cancelled, however, the Believers raised +\$4600
- Quarterly participation at Jubilee Kitchen, third Saturday of the month
- Financial help for several local families and Christmas gifts and groceries for a 4-year-old and his family
- Overnight mission trips were cancelled; however, several volunteers took on CCAP and WATTS as their local mission fields
- UMMen, UMWomen, Adult Sunday School Classes, Children and Youth, and many others in our church family continue to reach out into the community and support various mission projects and collections
- \$10,000 to various support ministries and individual assistance from Pastor’s discretionary fund
- \$20,000 in apportionment mission initiatives
- \$1,000 in Conference offerings toward mission

1 Peter 4:10 New International Version (NIV) “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”

Outreach meets the first Thursday in January, March, May, July, September and November at 7 pm. All are welcome to join our meetings.

Blessings, Tom and Penny Croll, Outreach Committee



CCAP, the Congregational-Community Action Project, is a cooperative ministry of area churches and one synagogue serving Winchester and Frederick County that have joined together to provide financial, material and supportive assistance to people in need. CCAP is located at 112 and 106 S. Kent Street.

Our first CCAP Day for 2021 is on Sunday, January 24. The Outreach Committee is collecting Men's thermal tops and bottoms sizes LARGE and above. Thermals are essential items for those who spend their days and nights outside. Thermal donations can be left in the CCAP Bin at church.

We served 50 chicken dinners at our CCAP lunch in December. Thanks so much to Cheryl and Mark Jones and their team for this meal. It was a hearty meal served with love and prayer. Our next Sunday lunch will be January 17. Because of Covid-19 restrictions, we are serving outside at CCAP and preparing the meals off-site. We will start packing the meals at 11am and should be finished serving by 1. Hope Owens will be the team lead for this meal. If you would like to be part of this Outreach; please contact Hope at hyotlo@yahoo.com or 540-533-3786.

Andrea Cosans started mid-December as the new Executive Director at CCAP. Your prayers for a smooth transition are coveted.

***We are all so grateful for the leadership and compassion Robin Russell showed when she stepped in to guide CCAP through COVID-19 and all the changes that social distancing and mask wearing required. Because of Robin, CCAP continued to serve its clients and all the many new clients in need of food, clothes, financial help and loving care. (See The Stoop written by Robin on the following pages)**

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE – Our church volunteers work regularly in the pantry and warehouse, pack food bags on Tuesday nights, work in the clothing sorting area and clothing house, work in financial assistance, do weekly pickups of business donations and take care of getting all the cardboard we discard to the recycling center - we generate a lot of cardboard!! Please reach out to Hope Owens, Dave Darsie, Marcia Etu, Pastor Steve and Abby, Donna Bonjo, Penny and Tom Croll, Steve Cunningham, Kathy Dixon, Laine and Sean Everhart, Donna and Bob Gallagher, Wilson Gilbert, Danette and Tim Heinlein, Cheryl and Mark Jones, Jimmy Grayson, Kim Norman, Lisa Patterson, Jay Powell, Keith Roberts, Robin Russell, Debbie Walker, Karen and Randy Willis, Sharon Woodard (or the many volunteers who help with giveaways and donations that I may not have seen), if you have any questions about what we do as volunteers at CCAP. All volunteers are required to wear a mask and closed toed shoes and are temperature scanned as we enter the building.

Any questions, please contact Patty Leonard at 540-664-6973 or ricpat5@gmail.com.

*Thank you for all you do for this ministry,
Patty Leonard*

*THE STOOP

Today is a day filled with many emotions. Today was my last day at CCAP, an amazing faith-filled ministry. I turned my keys in today. Everyone had gone for the day and I was to let myself out the back door when finished with some paperwork.

As the door shut and I heard the click, it was like a dagger in my heart. I began to walk towards my car, but then I saw him. One of my dear homeless friends, who called a nearby stoop his home. Over the 7 years, we became best of friends. We have had a lot of laughs together, a lot of frustrating moments and even tears together as he is battling liver failure. When he learned of my cancer diagnosis he would always tell me he was praying for me. As crazy as the homeless folks would drive me crazy, I would worry about them. As I would be sitting at home looking out my window and seeing the snow swirling, I would think of them and their plights and struggles. I would think of the families that were facing evictions, those that could not pay their utility bills, or were in need of food.

I can remember pre COVID days. We would welcome the homeless into the lobby during those cold wintry and rainy days. Often a coffee pot would be brought out into the lobby along with treats that we would find out back. I cannot tell you how many nights my dear friend Frances would stay there late so they did not have to be out in the elements. Back in the day, Miss Fran Ricketts would have them sleep in the lobby if the beds were full at Watts or if it was a family as Watts would not have housing for families or those with pets--yes she allowed pets in too. SHHH, no one knew her little secrets. Even though we were not an official shelter, Miss Fran would make a way. There were many huddles in that office. Frances and I would bow our heads and pray for the Lord to make a way for many situations. I was known as the Marshmallow because I had such a soft spot in my heart for people. I sit here laughing as I am typing this as along the way I did start to toughen up a bit!

A family of five showed up at the door today. They had a fire in their home last night. They only had the clothes on their backs. Tracey and I went over to the clothing house to fill bags with donated items to help clothe the family. I often think when I first became Vice President and asked Frances what I could help her with and she stated she wanted me to be in charge of clothing and the clothing house! Good Lord help me! I can remember the mound of clothes taking up half the room! The Lord always blessed us at CCAP. Let me tell you being in charge of clothing, broke my shopping addiction at Belk!

In my early days at CCAP, I started as a Receptionist, then became a Financial Interviewer, then VP, and ended with being the Executive Director. There were so many stories told over that desk in the interview office. Many times, the family members would cry as they shared their struggles and their stories. The Lord blessed me with the gift of praying for people. I would reach for their tired worn hands and pray away. Friendships were formed. When they would come for their monthly food, they would stop by to say hello and give me an update on how they were doing.

Many a morning the lobby would be overflowing with the homeless and our regular clients waiting to go back to the pantry, maybe see the interviewer, or waiting to go over to the clothing house. So many of us take for granted the privilege of having money to go to the grocery store, the local mall and the finances to pay our utility bills. I was a single mom who raised three children and knew what it was like to be in need. I had a loving family and friends who made sure we never went without. For a large part of our client base, CCAP is their family. We are the one they turn to when in need. Throughout the years, there would be home visits made or emergency deliveries made. Prayers would be offered up time and time again. I can remember both Miss Fran and Frances teaching me when we need something we need to pray, the Lord will bring it to us. I saw this happen over and over again. The cost of turkeys was \$4,800. Someone donated \$3,000 and then another check followed for \$1,800! The exact amount! Food, clothing, and financial assistance would continue to flood our ministry. Of course people would get upset about some situations and think people were just using us or misabusing the items they received such as selling them at the local flea market. We would always say everything that comes in the door belongs to the Lord. It is between them and the Lord. We just need to do what he has called us to do.

Holidays were so special at CCAP. Our warehouse would be busting at the seams with food for Thanksgiving. Frances had a unique and special way of getting food donations for Thanksgiving.

ROBIN'S STORY CONTINUES ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE.....

ROBIN'S STORY CONTINUES.....

Thanksgiving was Miss Fran's favorite holiday. As she continued to serve even when she was ill, she would come down and bundle up and greet the clients who had been waiting in line for hours to receive their Thanksgiving meal. Christmas giveaways were unreal. I can remember the Christmas at Mount Carmel Church. You could not find an empty space on the floor to put any items. At Easter, the lobby would be filled with baskets wrapped so delicately, filled with candy and toys for the little ones. The churches, organizations, and individual donors would always bless us so we could bless those in need.

Then came 2020. All things changed. Due to COVID we could no longer have clients and families in our buildings. We had to get creative with how we could continue our services.

Again I chuckle as I reflect back, with my blood work numbers being low due to chemo, I had to stay a distance when there was big giveaways. I got a frantic call from my dear friend Crystal, our volunteer coordinator, Robin we need to call the police to come help us. We were attempting to do a drive up giveaway and we had jammed traffic on Cork and Kent Street. People were shouting and horns blowing--quite the scene! The team carried on and many were blessed. Since drive thru's were challenging. We got creative and we headed to the neighborhoods with food and supplies.

Oh the fun we had! I can remember driving the blue van up a hill thinking we were not going to make it as it was loaded down with the milk. We would pull into a neighborhood and get on the bull horns to announce that CCAP was there to bless them. Some families did not know who we were and would ask why we were there? Our response--to bring food, love and hope.

We started to do financial assistance remotely. For the clothing house. The families would come to the main lobby and complete their forms of what they needed and our volunteers would fill the order. Our food distribution was being done out the back door.

In learning from one of our dear Board members, Bob Boulter, we must remember the relational ministry piece during this trying time. How are we going to connect with families during these troubled times?

As my friend and I stood saying good-bye with the town run, flowing swiftly behind us, I recalled the day they found a gentleman floating in town run. It made me think of how fleeting life is. If you would have told me on January 1, 2020 I would be diagnosed with breast cancer, then weeks after being diagnosed, I would become the leader of a nonprofit ministry and learn to lead them through the beginning of a Pandemic, I would have thought you crazy! These past 10 months have made me realize any one of us could end up on a stoop. Many families are one pay check away from becoming homeless, many families are living without heat, many are struggling with putting food on their table. There are many that are bound in addictions and lost. There is a battle of mental illness going on in many lives.

The one comforting thing to many has been that humble yellow abode located on 112 South Kent Street known as CCAP. We may not have the fanciest building, our ceiling tiles may be faded brown, our floors may be crooked, but we provide love, hope, faith, hugs (now airless) and so much more.

It has been a blessing to be a part of the 45th year of CCAP and the last 7 years. I cannot begin to thank all of you, my friends, family, churches, volunteers and my dear clients for your support and prayers and for being a part of the CCAP Family. The CCAP family is very dear and near to me. I know the Lord is looking down at us and saying Well done my good and faithful servants. You are all amazing in all you do! Thank you for all you have done to make a difference in other people's lives.

May 2021 be a blessing for all of you. Always remember when the Lord gives you vision, he gives provision. Remember that next person standing at the door in need just may be Jesus! Will you answer the knock? May we never judge and no matter where we are in life may we always be the light and hands and feet of Jesus.

God Bless You All and THANK YOU!!!!

Peace to you

Hugs!

Robin Russell, a woman saved by grace and healed by Jesus

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