

Circles of Care Ministries Report 2016 **Aka: Outreach and Mission**

Circles of Care Programs Supported:

Outdoor Church: The people of Sanctuary UCC are promise keepers. We made a vow to the Outdoor Church ministry that we would contribute sandwiches to their cause of feeding those with food insecurities. Every fifth Sunday, a few friends of Sanctuary gather to assemble 70-80 tasty sandwiches, full of tuna or egg salad. By the grace of God, the promise made to Outdoor Church has not gone unbroken, and Sanctuary has every intention to keep it that way.

Pride Parade: Sanctuary UCC specializes in offering an extravagant welcome to ALL people. For that reason, this congregation is proud to be recognized as an Open and Affirming Congregation for persons a part of the LGBTQ community. Our outward expression of this inward passion was displayed during the Boston Pride Parade. And just like baptism, all those from Sanctuary who participated were washed over with immeasurable joy, thrill, and the sudden urge to dance! We marched alongside other O&A churches, demonstrating a wider commitment to welcoming and uplifting all of God's children.

Bread of Life: What began as a hopeful possibility has now evolved into a regularly scheduled calendar event. Impressed and inspired by the good news they heard about Bread Of Life (BOL), Julie Roberts and Charlene Carle had a hunch that Sanctuary, too, could be involved. Like clockwork, a meeting was arranged, and a healthy group of congregants gathered for the sake of service. Along with Julie and Charlene, four others of the congregation welcomed Gabriella Snyder Stelmack into our midst. Gabriella is the Special Projects Coordinator for BOL and gave a dynamic presentation on the ways in which Sanctuary might be of help to their mission. This exciting exchange resulted into the commitment that Sanctuary will help to facilitate a meal at Bread Of Life on the second Thursday during even numbered months! In fact, the first meal coincided with our Teen Volunteer Program AM-2-PM, which made for a great moment of blended ministry. In keeping with the theme of intermixing, in the month of October, Sanctuary UCC and Shiloh Baptist Church became more than just neighbors and are official partners at BoL. Anytime Sanctuary is there, Shiloh is also in the building.

Short Stop Ministry: Our sister church, North Prospect Union, is very adamant about their commitment to fighting homelessness. One way the congregation does so is by providing meals to Short Stop, a home for young adults in search of financial and spiritual stability. A few devoted folk from Sanctuary also help with this effort by making food and visiting the residents alongside NPU caregivers.

Medford Overcoming Addiction: Sanctuary has a robust and multi-layered relationship with Medford Overcoming Addiction. Administratively, the church performs the role of the organization's fiduciary, housing its funds and providing it with the 501c3 status to receive funding. Yet, in a ministerial realm, the church offers spiritual care and hospitality to the group and its members. Prayer time and good vibes were made available to people at the MOA Kickball Tournament, and at vigils pastoral presence and comforting words were rendered. Sanctuary aims to deepen its relationship with MOA by finding more direct ways to engage with MOA's efforts. IN addition, through Medford's Office of Prevention and

Outreach Sanctuary's staff are members of a coalition of interested organizations investing in efforts to fight addiction—especially in connection with the Opioid crisis.

AM-2-PM Report: Gold Rush: In August, every four years, there is a strange phenomenon that happens. It starts off in one city and after no time at all, this weird occurrence spreads like wildfire. All over the world, in 204 different countries, millions of people everywhere do one thing: they change their favorite color. No longer does any of them like red, orange, or yellow; they don't want anything to do with green or blue; and any shade of purple is out of the question. These people are concerned about one color, and one color only: gold.

Gold is for winners; gold is for first place; gold is for record breakers and history makers; gold is for champions; gold is for ultimate achievers and leaders; gold is for the persistent, the fearless, the dedicated... Gold is for those who work for it.

And every athlete of the 2016 Olympic games in Rio put in the work to be a competitor on this world stage. Endless training sessions, long hours at the gym, and extensive practices, all combined to qualify these athletes a guaranteed spot at this event. Although they started off with zero medals, they began with only one goal: to get the gold.

Around the same time, another kind of Olympics happened -- except not in Rio, but in Medford. And, instead of sporting events, it had different forms of community service.

AM-2-PM is Sanctuary's first ever youth volunteer initiative. Twelve teenagers came together to participate in this service project. Although some of them may be athletes in their own right, the only thing that qualified them for entry to this program was their willingness to make a positive difference in the neighborhood. They started off with zero volunteer hours, but also with one goal: to get the gold.

However, for this team, gold meant something different. This gold did not include cheers or applause from an audience. This gold was not for public display, nor did it denote honor or status. And this gold did not involve any high profile interviews or front page covers on magazines. Yet, this gold, with all of its unpopular qualities, was still precious and worth every bit of their time.

This gold was the satisfaction of knowing that even the smallest action can make the largest impact. This gold was the overriding emotion of pride that develops when something that matters is done. This gold was the feeling of fulfillment that comes after actually doing something unto others as we would like others to do unto us. This gold had nothing to do with monetary value and everything to do with morality virtues.

These teens realized that finding this gold was not in the slightest bit difficult. In fact, all it involved was asking one question: "How can I help?" With these four curious words, the teens struck gold -- 7 days in a row, from 9AM to 6:30PM. They were on a gold rush.

This gold rush led them to the Medford Council on Aging, where they organized the newly renovated senior center. It took them to communities of faith like the Unitarian Universalist Church of Medford and Shiloh Baptist Church, which requested some TLC. And, it even directed them to the kitchen table of a West Medford resident who is blind and receives much enjoyment from being read the Medford Transcript.

From Medford, to Malden, and even to Concord, the teens of AM-2-PM not only struck gold, but proved their weight in it, too, earning over 50 hours of service in a week. They worked smart and not hard, proving the African proverb true: "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." And, that is as good as gold.

“Medford Cares”: Ten members, friends and staff attended the Leadership Development Initiative in early 2017 to take the next steps toward developing a pilot Medford Cares program designed to connect people in need with those who want to love and serve their neighbor. The pilot will be supported by a community organizing coach from LDI and we are hopeful that the energy we experience throughout the training program will empower this exciting and faithful ministry toward growth in faith and growth in engagement in our city! Watch for ways you can serve and watch for more details about the ways we will serve Medford.

Medford Conversations: Throughout 2016 both pastors worked tirelessly to develop, plan and present the Medford Conversations Project Winter Series. The pilot program, which was attended by over 200 people including numerous member and friends of Sanctuary, addressed the topic: “Who Belongs: Race and Ethnicity in Medford and Beyond.” Rev. Lambert and Rev. Wendy helped lead the event and will continue in their roles in the program steering committee.

Pine Ridge Ministry/Lakota YouthStay Program: see separate report.

2016 Outreach/Mission Objectives and Giving from Sanctuary

Several times during 2016 an ad-hoc Outreach/Mission team met to discuss our interests. In November, 2016 the team identified the following interests as “having our heart” and being important to us as a church:

- The Camp at Standing Rock
- A Lakota Friend of the Congregation in Need (to remain in school and prepare this person for serving the Lakota people.
- Outdoor Church
- City Mission
- Heifer International
- Medford Overcoming Addiction
- Bread of Life
- One Spirit-Food Justice on Pine Ridge

Further the team identified key values that should direct our gift giving decisions and engagement efforts:

- 1) Everything is local;
- 2) We want not to “send money” but be changed by direct engagement and having a relationship;
- 3) We want to give where it will make an impact;

- 4) We see that some of the things on our list have strong support from larger congregations and don't feel out small gifts would have as much impact (ie City Mission);
- 5) Bread of Life and potentially One Spirit are places where we could apply the Pleasant Street Grant and/or the Pleasant Street Grant and some of our own money to make an impact that would support the overhead/institution that is serving. In other words – give to the infrastructure/capital campaign so that the systems and institution are in place. We plan to revisit this topic in 2017 with the objective to present Leadership Circle with proposal to make one time gifts to one or both organizations;
- 6) We will settle on making larger gifts to a small number of mission knowing that this list is one that identifies organizations and missions in the local community that we want to lean into and find ways to build out more engagement;
- 7) Members will reach out to Medford Overcoming Addiction and find if there are ways for people other than Wendy to participate and learn from them (as we did from Pine ridge) what is important and how we can support their work;
- 8) We will continue to do meals at Bread of Life, Outdoor church;
- 9) We will find ways to do Heifer “event,” City Mission Immersion and Christmas shop, etc. this coming year (with families, children and youth).

2016 Spending for Circles of Care and Outreach Giving was \$ 12,288.05; as follows:

- I. 1200.00 (LDI Program attended in 2017)
- II. 677.00 (Outdoor Church)
- III. 4441.05 (LakotaYouthStay)
- IV. 1092.00 (Discretionary Community Grants 1.75% of Projected Revenue)
 - a. 500.00 Standing Rock Camp
 - b. 400.00 Medford Overcoming Addiction
 - c. 192.00 Native American Student
- V. 1092.00 (Ministers Discretionary 1.75%)
 - a. 200.00 NAACP Membership
 - b. 500.00 (Stop and Shop Food cards)
 - c. 150.00 (MBTA 15.00 Charlie Cards)
 - d. 208.00 (Native American Student for total of 500.00)
- VI. 936.00 (Designated Denominational 1.5%) to Testimony Gift (per UCC Grant)
- VII. 3120.00 (United Church Mission 5%)
- VIII. 3730.00 One time (2015 undistributed)
 - a. 2500.00 (matching grant to LYS savings)
 - b. 1230.00 to Testimony Gift (per UCC Grant)