

*Selected stories from*

**NetConnect**

*The Monthly Newsletter of the Kentucky Annual Conference*

**November 2011**

**Food Pantry a Blessing to Church and Community**

By Johnny Craig, Pastor, Vine Grove UMC

Each Thursday except the third Thursday of the month, the Vine Grove United Methodist Church (Elizabethtown District) serves on average 40 individuals/families with food assistance. Our need is growing; sometimes it's 50. Not too long ago I received a request from Fort Knox to help more families and had to say no due to our own limited resources.

The work begins early each Thursday with someone having to pick up the items at Feeding America in Elizabethtown. Different persons pick this up each week and deliver the items to our Food pantry. Church member Ronnie Atcher picks up on the first Thursday; this is the large load each month. Ronnie picks up not only the weekly items that we purchase or "no share," no cost, along with the items we must pay for, and the "Supplement Boxes," a USDA program. The supplement boxes are for person over 60 and low income. Some of these persons are also disabled. Sharon Ramsey, church member and lay delegate, knows many of the persons we serve. She and her husband stock the shelves and pack the boxes each week, and I assist in this when I can. We try to balance the boxes out with good proteins, carbs, and vegetables, and a little something extra on occasion. Sharon and David Ramsey or her father pick up the items ordered each week and deliver to the Vine Grove UMC.

Over the past year we have taken in several new members, and four of them are active in the Food Pantry Ministry. Mike and Tambra Greenwell are faithful to show up each week after mowing the church/parsonage lawns (at no cost to the church) to carry or "buggy" out the food to the recipient's car, if they have one. Recently, new members Bill and Penny Rannebarger started helping out each week at delivery time. In the past year, I have tried to be as active as I can each week and to make the program not only a handout of food but to get to know the persons we serve.

Over the next few months, we are going to make some changes to the program. One, to purchase foods that are most nutritional and beneficial for our recipients. Two, we are going to start asking them if we can pray for them or is there anything else we can do to serve them. Third, we are going to work on the screening process.

We offer the food to them in the name of Jesus and say a kind word, have a laugh or simply say "May the Lord bless you." It is a true joy to help persons who truly need it. It is a blessing to hear someone say thank you. We say "Thank the Lord"

or "Give thanks to God." We would like to be able to help more persons in our area, but, like so many of the persons who come, we are stretched pretty thin as well. Our effort in this area runs about \$400 per month on average, most of the time more. Over the past few months it has been more due to an increase in recipients.

This ministry was in place when I was appointed here in 2010. I was glad to know we had a food pantry. Matthew 25 reminds us that when we give unto the least of these our brothers and sisters in Jesus' name, we have done it unto Him. Each week when I leave, and I know I speak for the rest of the Food Pantry Team, I feel blessed to have served Christ in this way. We try to remember, "We are blessed to be a blessing."

If there are persons or churches who would like to help in any way, we would be like to expand this area of serving Christ in our community. You can contact us at: [vgumch@bbtel.com](mailto:vgumch@bbtel.com) or our website: [www.vinegroveumc.com](http://www.vinegroveumc.com). My e-mail is [jec0@hotmail.com](mailto:jec0@hotmail.com).

### **Camp Kids After-School Program**

By Sharon Goldsmith

Camp Ground UMC in Bonnierville, Ky. (Elizabethtown District) launched an entirely new program for their small community on September 12, 2011. The church built a new Family Life Center and dedicated it in March. Church member Andrea Nichols said, "Because God has blessed us with this beautiful building and the ability for us to reach out to our community, we felt like God wanted us to allow the use of this building to others."

We are blessed with an elementary school, and we wanted to reach out to them in some way. We contacted the principal and asked if we could do a prayer walk through the school on Sunday before it opened the following week. She allowed us to do that and what a blessing! We then worked with her and the teachers to establish an after-school program called Camp Kids, beginning September 12.

Our focus is for kindergarten through 6th grade every Monday from 3:15 - 4:30 p.m. Permission forms were signed, and we pick the children up in our church van every week for snacks, devotion, and activity and games. We are loving this ministry with the children, and they seem to love it too. Each week more children are coming. Praise God for our Family Life Center, and we pray we will always use it for His glory.

## **Chili Cook-off Starts with Spicy War of Words, Ends in Charitable Donation**

By Wayne Garvey, Pastor, Marion UMC

February 6, 2011 ("Soup"er Bowl Sunday, in our case) dawned to spicy vapors ascending from ten chili cauldrons in preparation for the Marion United Methodist Church (Madisonville District) IRON (Pot) CHEF Chili Cook-off. Ten contestants from the Greater Metropolitan Area of Marion, Ky. were about to go "spoon-to-spoon" as they vied for the trophy and the privilege of selecting the charity to which the prize money would be donated.

Weeks before, however, smack-talk had crowded cyberspace as contestants bantered about their entries. Said the first, "I heartily accept the challenge...I shall bring a pot of [my] world infamous chili. I am already deliberating on which charitable cause will receive the gains of my First Place winnings (I count my chickens before they hatch)...Don't let my early entry intimidate any others, because it should still be a spirited contest for second place."

In response, another replied, "I ... hereby enter my own chili recipe into the competition. I am surprised at \_\_\_\_, being an attorney by profession, counting his chili beans before they are cooked ... he is certainly aware that juries are fickle in their decisions. Now that two gloves have been thrown down, who else will rise to the occasion?"

Still a third chimed in, "I have accepted the challenge as well. No smack—just meat and beans from this side."

Then, a judge wanted to know what kind of rules there were for the entrants, and signed his/her note: "I almost pity the panel of judges, but if chosen, I feel I am up to the task. Signed, Joe/Josephine 'Money Talks' Smith" (names changed to protect the guilty). So even as ten pots simmered, the congregation was in a swivet over who might win the coveted trophy.

The judging panel was seated separately with their ten demitasses of chili. Lemon sherbet was provided to cleanse the palate between each tasting. When all was eaten and done, the tallies revealed that Chris Evans was #1, to be declared the Tonsil Torcher, Dr. John Newcom was the Adenoid Arsonist at #2, and Alan Stout, at #3, was the Larynx Lambaster. Mr. Evans selected the Methodist Children's Homes to receive the prize money of \$513.86.

Surreptitious surveys of the world's spice and pepper markets are happening even as you read this, in preparation for the 2012 2nd Annual IRON (Pot) CHEF Chili Cook-Off. Who will get the prize money next year?

## **Golden Disciples - Food for Thought**

By Jane Ellen Booth

### **Scripture of the Month**

Revelation 7:11b-12: ...And they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, singing, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

### **Prayer of the Month**

Lord, thank you for the season of in-between—that delightful interlude between the fever of summer and the frosty chill of winter. Make me more aware of fall's splendor. The theme of autumn is harvest, the fields ripe and rich with plenty, the orchards hanging heavy with the yellow and red of succulent apples.

Help me not to be blown about by the wind called "Hurry," so that I may appreciate and enjoy in full measure your wonderful gift of autumn. The bright carpet of leaves beneath our feet crunches with a satisfying sound that slows the hurrying steps and the busy mind. This is fall. I bow my head. I'm thankful for the in-between. Amen.  
(From "Tribute to Autumn," by Donna Ramsey Clark)

### **Thought for the Month**

If you sow seeds of happiness...your harvest will be sweet. You'll give a smile...and get a smile...from everyone you meet. You'll have a cheerful word or two...for everyone you know. And, in your heart the sun will shine, for God will smile on you.  
(From "Happiness," by Everett Milstead)

### **Senior Ministry Tip**

Plan to include a senior (or two) in your Thanksgiving celebration who might otherwise be alone, and join together in thanking God for the blessings of this year.

### 2012 Dates to Remember

February: Have a Heart for Seniors Love Offering

April 19: Exploring the Longevity Revolution: Aging and Ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, hosted by Wesley Village Senior Living Community in Wilmore, Ky.

May: Celebrate Older Adult Recognition Day.

*Sponsored by Kentucky Conference Older Adult Ministry Team*