

Chippewa Falls Mission Coalition 2015 Year In Review 1-2-16

General CFMC Info – The Chippewa Falls Mission Coalition started in August 2011 with six local churches. Today our numbers include 17 local churches and we're in contact with more than 20 local non-profits.

We meet once a month, normally on the first Monday of the month at various locations. Our meetings start at 5:00 pm and end promptly at 6:00 pm.

Our meetings start with a general prayer and end with all of us holding hands and reciting the Lord's Prayer/Our Father.

Our goal is to work together on local and global mission outreach, often helping each other with our individual mission projects.

We try to stay pro-active in our community, reaching out and asking where help is required for those in need.

We are guided by the Holy Spirit. Our Mission Statement and Bible Verse are as follows ...

CFMC Mission Statement: "Faithful people joining hearts and hands to be God's Love in action for our neighbors near and far."

CFMC Bible Verse: Psalm 60:12 -- "With God's help we will do mighty things."

Here is a look of a number of things we have been involved with this past year...

-- **Lather With Love (February)** -- Churches and non-profits in CFMC once again gathered laundry detergent along with dish soap, shampoos, hand soap, etc. for the local food pantries.

-- **Ways To Help Those In Need In Our Community** -- Discussed various ways that local churches can assist people that are currently in need of food or shelter. The list included the following ... CareLink ... Agnes' Table ... Barnabas Table ... Open Door Clinic ... Local Food Pantries (Salvation Army, First Presbyterian, Notre Dame/St. Francesca, Valley Vineyard, Community Pantry).

-- **POSSIBLE HOMELESS SOLUTIONS** --

* Mike Cohoon of Landmark Church presented the idea of looking into the construction of "Tiny Houses" to house the homeless. Website ... <http://tinyhousebuild.com/>

* Ruth Roseneau from the Chippewa County Housing Authority shared that they could provide \$5,000 toward the purchase of a homeless shelter. The CCHA can assist with rehabilitation of a shelter building, maintenance costs for the building and utilities, but they do not have funds to staff such a shelter.

* We also discussed the Family Promise/Interfaith model, but most of the churches aren't equipped to house people overnight on a regular basis.

* Discussed Legacy Center – A place where community organizations with the desire to collaborate and innovate will assist citizens of Chippewa County who need to be lifted up as a result of hardship or other challenging circumstances.

* Barnabas House is opening its doors through the evening hours to provide a warming shelter for those in need. They developed a set of rules/protocol for this venture and it got underway in November 2015. It is a test mission running through the winter months and will be evaluated this coming Spring.

* Discussed doing another “Community Gathering” after the first of the year to discuss the homeless issue in Chippewa Falls. We are currently checking to see if there is community interest in doing such a gathering.

-- GUEST SPEAKERS --

Dennis Brown -- Chippewa County Emergency Preparedness Coordinator. He requested contact phone number for area clergy/churches to be used in the wake of an event such as tornado or fire. This list is updated every two years.

Kayla Midthun – Chippewa Area Mentor Program. They provide mentors for K-12 at Chippewa Public and Parochial schools. They currently have 250 matches and are looking for more adults to match with mentor students. If interested call 715-726-2417 or email -- <http://cfsd.chipfalls.k12.wi.us/cvMentors.cfm>

Jan Engelsjerd – Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. Invited CFMC group to attend a book study for “A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity.”

Matt Elstran – St. Francesca Food Pantry/Notre Dame Church. Did a cost-effective laundry soap-making demonstration. Ingredients: Borax, Washing Soda, Fels Naphtha Soap, Water. Cost: 68 cents for 3-1/2 gallons of soap. We were also given a tour of the St. Francesca Food Pantry.

Jens Nielsen – Plymouth Street Ministry – There are currently about 8 volunteers involved in this street ministry that started in Chippewa and then move to Eau Claire upon the closing of “Starting Points.” They deal with the homeless by providing food, clothing and hygiene kits out of a car twice week. Their goal is not to convert. They also visit hospitals and jails to offer moral support.

Suzanne Becker – Feed My People – The topic was “Weekend Kids Meals.” Every Friday the “Feed My People” truck drops off bags of food for kids to provide them nutrition through the weekend. She is looking for churches/non-profits interested in sponsoring a school.

Rev. Laurie Skow-Anderson – Assistant to the Bishop of the ELCA Church NW Synod of Wisconsin. Rev. Laurie brought a \$1,000 Evangelical & Outreach Grant to be used for our “Lighten Your Load” laundry mission. She also made a presentation with helpful ideas for approaching participants in a way to share our faith, but not make them feel uncomfortable.

-- LIGHTEN YOUR LOAD Laundry Mission –

It was brought to our attention by Shannon Larson from the Chippewa School System that there was a need to help people with their laundry. We learned people were throwing clothes away rather than washing them, then going to shelters to get replacement clothes.

A CFMC Team was formed to look into possible solutions. From that team came the idea for the “Lighten Your Load” laundry mission. A guesstimate of \$3,000/month could possibly be needed to sustain this ministry based on 50 families washing 3 loads per visit.

It was decided to offer this ministry on a 3-month test basis, starting in October 2015. This might be a temporary ministry in the event the proposed Legacy Center is completed and laundry services are offered at that facility.

It is currently being offered the first and third weeks of the month on Tuesday from 6-9 pm and Thursday from 1-4 pm.

Through December we have done about 50 loads of laundry. Word is starting to get around. So, it was decided to extend the test period through February 2016 or until our money runs out.

We received several comments from people using our laundry mission outreach. Here is one of the comments ...

"This is a fantastic idea to help out the community. I sure need this. I have not washed clothes for about a month in a machine. I thank you. I will pass it along. Blessings." - Cindy

-- Helped With A Move (July) – We received a request from Sandy Winrich at ADRC that a man from Taiwan needed help moving from his apartment. We got a team together and helped him with the move.

-- Soles For Souls (July) – The CFMC joined with the local Methodist churches and their mission project of “Soles for Souls.” The shoes we gather are to be distributed

to those in need in both the United States and the world beyond our borders. Approximately 4,000 – 4,500 shoes were gathered.

-- **School Supply Giveaway (August)** – The CFMC joined with the Valley Vineyard Church to gather backpacks and school supplies for kids in need at the Chippewa area schools. More than 600 backpacks with supplies were given away.

-- **Requests From Local Agencies** – During the course of the year we get various requests from local agencies requesting assorted items such as blankets, baby clothes, kitchenware, furniture, etc. Those requests are passed along to the entire CFMC email list. In most cases, the feedback I get from the agencies is an immediate response to their needs from one or more churches.

We are making a Difference!

Keep the Faith!

Tom Drehmel
Chippewa Falls Mission Coalition