

Chippewa Falls Mission Coalition Minutes – Monday, June 2, 2025

PLACE: Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, 1300 Mansfield St., Chippewa Falls, WI

TIME: 5:00 p.m.

* Introductions and Prayer Requests

* Opened Meeting With Prayer by Laura Garry.

* **Guest Speaker:** Rev. Breanna Illiene, Director of Ecumenical Innovation and Justice Initiative, Wis. Council of Churches - illene@wichurches.org – 608-837-3108, ext. 27

Subject: “Community Care” – Using Congregations to Increase Digital Equity in Our Communities.

-- About Wisconsin Council of Churches (WCC)

- WCC – Ecumenical organization with 23 traditions as part of the council. Working together on behalf of the most vulnerable – all are always welcome.
- Breanna does legislative advocacy (how do we show up as the church at the capitol and live out our values there) and ecumenical innovation (how does the church respond to issues.)

-- What if every church was a center of justice and community care? (Flyer distributed on Community Care - available at <https://www.wichurches.org/digital-equity>)

- We use the internet for so many things (paying bills, banking, shopping, hearing aids, medical devices, communication, worship streaming, shopping, cattle RFID tags, etc.) We often think of needing housing and food, but electricity and internet are also vital needs.
- WCC has partnered with United Way, using churches as a vehicle to promote digital equity.
- How can church-based digital equity work, work?
 - **Access:** If you're a part of a congregation, could your building be used for a co-working space in fellowship halls? Could you partner with a local social worker and provide space for tele-health appointments?
 - **Adoption:** Folks need to learn how to exist in a digital space safely – with AI, with misinformation, with cyber security, etc.

- www.communityupskill.org has courses on fundamentals. Gives the skills to enter job markets.
- **Affordability**
 - Are there ways to help people get devices? (You've upgraded to a new device – can we recycle and distribute to someone without one?)
 - If you were affected by the pandemic, you might qualify for a free device.
 - WCC is looking for partners who want to do a device giveaway – anywhere from 2-50 devices would qualify.
 - Lifeline Program: a federal benefit – between \$7.25-\$18.50 a month that can be used for their bill if they qualify for things like Medicaid, Food Share, Veterans benefits, etc.
 - In Wisconsin, Call 211 – they have digital navigators who help get people online. They walk someone through enrolling for Lifeline. Have translation services!
 - Question: Is this support available in every county of Wisconsin? Answer: YES!

***Mission Update/Outreach:** Gregg Mizerk, Director of LE Phillips Career Development Center, attending to answer questions about the new direction for the CDC Chippewa Outreach Office - gregg@lecdc.org

-- Funding For Chippewa Falls CDC Office

- Funding comes from what is done in Eau Claire and the work they do with for people with disabilities. They are a non-profit organization.
- In Eau Claire, they also have ways of generating their own profit. They're well-funded.

-- Future Outlook for Chippewa Falls CDC Office

- Focus will be on serving people with emphasis on the homeless.
- Will be referring people to the right organization that has the funding to help.

-- What will this look like?

- Maybe volunteers, maybe part-time employees, maybe one full-time employee – it's still being determined. Maybe people with disabilities could find employment there.
- In Chippewa Falls, they want to be open more than they have been, hope to be open later hours in Chippewa Falls. But we'll see how the hours end up working out.
- Leadership will take a look at what's redundant that other organizations already are doing in the area and will not duplicate services. Looking at what makes sense for partnership with organizations like Family Support Center, etc.
- Question: Will Carelink still run out of that office? Answer: Yes.
- Question: Are hotel vouchers still part of CDC? Answer: If they get a grant, they give 100% to individuals in need. So yes, if the funds are available.
- Question: Will the food pantry stay open? (Having a variety of open hours in the community is helpful.) Answer: Yes, keeping the food pantry – but it will depend on how everything gets finalized. Depends on the person-power for getting the actual food items to the pantry.

How can we help?

- Donations, volunteering, referrals.
- They're not going anywhere- just signed a lease for 3 more years. Looking at collaborating, looking at fundraising. Hopefully by August Chippewa Falls will see them open more and helping to get people referred to the right organizations.
- Question: Would it be beneficial for the local Chippewa Falls organizations to communicate what would be lost if the Chippewa Falls CDC office were to close? Answer: Sure, but there might be things that need to be referred to other organizations instead. You can email Greg at gregg@lecdc.org

Thank you, Chippewa Falls CDC Staff!

- Jenn and Karri were very involved and receptive to all people and have done a lot of great work! We're very appreciative. Jenn has recently left for another position in Menomonie, Karri continues to carry the load at the Chippewa Office.

- Question: Staff has been very connected with the community outside of ‘business hours’ like at CFMC meetings– will that continue? Answer: Not sure that this will continue. In the future, Staff’s focus will be on their job at CDC Office, which means they may not be able to attend meetings during office hours.

-- Requested Follow-Up

Requested Gregg to come back in a few months. Right now it’s going through a change period and maybe in a few months there will be more information. We just want to keep an open line of communication to make it work the best we can. Gregg also offered the opportunity to visit their Eau Claire CDC office. If interested, you can email Greg at gregg@lecdc.org

*** Mission Update: Hope Village/Tiny Houses (Mike Cohoon)**

-- Hope Village Resale Shop at Indianhead

- Having a sale every Friday 8:30am-5:00pm. Picking up items from estate sales, Mason Shoe, etc. Currently, not taking donations, because need storage for what they already have picked up from various estate sales. Goal is to raise \$200 a week. Hoping to have a weekend-long sale soon to sell all the previous motel room items to make room for new items.
- ****Cash/check only at the Resale Shop, no credit cards at this time.**
- Need volunteers for restocking and organizing the shop during the week, also to work the Friday morning shifts and/or afternoon shifts! If interested, contact Diane Bertram ... 715-529-6316 ...
dfmanning56@gmail.com

-- Indianhead Motel – Affordable Housing Progress

- Got the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) \$1.5million to go towards the renovation of the motel! Hope to start the renovation October 1, 2025. Maybe open January 2026? All rooms will be renovated with heat, ac, kitchenettes, bathrooms, new flooring and paint, etc.

-- Hope Village building progress – Open House?

- All they’re waiting on is for Xcel to bring power. Maybe end of June/early July will have an open house tour

-- Number of Tiny Houses currently filled?

- All 11 tiny homes are filled. 14 children onsite.

-- Golf Scramble Fund Raiser

- July 28 – Monday. Raised \$8700 from major sponsors to get started. Have your congregations/orgs put together a group of four to play. (You don't have to be a good golfer – there are prizes for 1st, 7th, and 14th place.☺)

*** Mission Update:** Chippewa Co. Hunger and Homeless Council – Have you come in contact recently with any homeless people looking for help with food or shelter? (Mike Cohoon)

*** Mission Update:** “Lighten Your Load” Family Laundry Mission. (Gayle Klitzke)
Volunteers? Funds?

- Numbers from Jan-April:
 - 146 people attended.
 - More than 343 loads.
 - 15 volunteers, 2 people attend each session.
 - Spent \$1,655.
- Policy is to close when the school district does during school year.
- Notebook for people to tell how LYL has helped them (summarized)
 - Being a single mom, times are terribly tough.
 - With two kids, laundry is expensive. I'm grateful for the help in this rough chapter in my life.
- Sign-up Genius for volunteers will be sent out next week – would love to have new folks added or even just as substitutes. The more volunteers, the better!
- Doing okay on supplies (laundry soap, etc.)

*** Mission Outreach:** CFMC July Meal Services at Agnes' Table (July 17th) and Barnabas Table (July 14th) -- (Tom Drehmel)

-- Sign Up to serve at one or both meal services.

- Remember: No CFMC meeting in July.
- Email Tom to sign up ... tdrehmel@me.com The social interactions are so important, so just come, provide a meal and build relationships.

***Question: What about the August backpack giveaway at Valley Vineyard?** Tom will keep us updated via email and contact Mike and Trish.

*** Other Business/Announcements**

-- **Pot Luck Dinner** at First Presbyterian Church on June 11th at 5:00 pm followed by a presentation about Puentes/Bridges and the work they do with local farmers and migrant workers. All are invited. (Ruth Rosenow)

- Local dairy farmer will be present to share their story and one of his employees.

-- Jan Drehmel will be leading a **Community Study on Season One of the video series “The Chosen”** at Central Lutheran starting June 11th (Wednesday evening) at 6:15pm and running for eight weeks. Each Wednesday we will watch one of the episodes and then have a discussion time before and after the video. All are invited. Info Flyer available.

-- Our Saviour’s and Trinity UMC are joining forces and having a **Community Vacation Bible School** from Monday, July 28th thru Friday, Aug. 1st from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. All are invited. Contact Our Saviour’s for more info. <https://www.oslccf.org/2025-vbs-registration>

FSET Open House – 405 Island Street – Wednesday June 25th from 1-3pm

- FSET - Food Share Employment & Training
- Come learn how FSET supports Food Share recipients with developing employment goals, increasing job skills and education, developing a resume, job preparation and job search, job retention, career exploration, and support services
- Contact Info: 715-491-9809 www.myfset.net
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Agnes Table is in need of Meal Sponsors and Volunteers to Serve. Please reach out to Julia by messaging Agnes Table on Facebook. Lots of openings in July. They serve anywhere from 150-210 people a night.

Christ Episcopal is holding a **crafting supplies sale**. Saturday June 14 from 9-4. Also Worldwide Knit in Public Day ☺

No Soles 4 Souls Shoe Mission This Year! – Thank you Ken and Shirley for 17 years of this ministry! Mason Shoe will still be collecting if you want to donate. If you or your church/organization have an interest in taking on the Soles4Souls mission, contact Ken and Shirley ... froelich1355@gmail.com

Christ in Action Disaster Response – Downtown St Louis short term mission trips to do help and clean up. The county has been open in inviting ministering to the community. One group leaving June 9 and a second group June 30. If your congregation would like to participate in those mission trips or possibly future mission trips, let Joan Miller know at midwest@christinaction.com / 703-584-5346

*** Next Meeting – August 4, 2025 at St Francesca’s Resource Center, 117 Allen St., Chippewa Falls.**

- **NOTE: Now Meeting Every Other Month (Even Months), instead of every month. With CFM emails, Website and Facebook it’s much easier to get information out to everyone on a regular basis.**

*** Closed meeting with Lord’s Prayer/Our Father**

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.”

WEBSITE: cfmissioncoalition.org -- **FACEBOOK:** facebook.com/cfmissioncoalition