

BUILDING A FUTURE

Monday nights we tutor our neighborhood kids; this has been happening for thirty years. We hope to encourage our kids to continue in their education and go as far as they possibly can go. Some start very young and end up going farther in education than any other member of their family has gone. A few reach for their bachelors degree. Right now we have two young men that hope to go into engineering. God sent some tutors who are engineers to encourage them and work with them. Others have helped students learn about college and take them to see campuses around Detroit.



It is an uphill battle because few of their friends are on track to go to college. Sometimes family members discourage them from continuing because they want them to earn a little money immediately instead of taking time for more school. We love every one of our students and kids and most importantly we teach them the Gospel of Jesus. Pray for our kids to learn to love Jesus and to use God's gift of their mind to their fullest potential.

CHRISTMAS A TIME TO LEARN

Our Christmas routine begins in November when Meghan Smith gathers all the gifts for Samaritan's Purse Christmas child. Our helpers get everything ready and our kids make greeting cards and then pack the boxes. Each year we play a video for the kids so they can see poverty in the third world. We share a message of God's call to us to love our brothers and that we can do that without personally know them. The gifts are given by local ministries. Teaching the kids to love and give to others is our hope for this activity.



Packing Christmas boxes

SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL WHO HELP US

God has blessed us in many ways through many of His people. People come and support us and help us reach out to adults and youth. Our work would be impossible if we were left without God's gracious people joining us. VBS helpers, children church volunteers, tutors, drivers, some who join us in worship, and those who pray for us all make our work possible. Barb and I have often thought that we get to know the best people in God's kingdom, those who give of themselves for the sake of others. God bless you all.

GOSPEL CONTEST

At tutoring and our Friday youth group we try to create a desire to learn about God and the Gospel. The last couple of years we have been teaching two curriculums one on the Westminster Catechism and another on the Gospel. Each has about 35 questions and the Gospel also has 5 verses the kids memorize. Each question and verse has a point value attached to it.



We found that if we create a competition between boys and girls the students work a bit harder to move ahead. We also reward a student every time they score 100 points. By repeating this game over the last two years we see more of the information sticking in their minds.

We also worship, teach, and pray with them. We hope and pray that the knowledge of God will take hold in their hearts and they will know Jesus as their Savior.

PRAY FOR US

Pray that the stress of our neighborhood will not diminish God's grace in our hearts and work.

Pray for our youth to know Jesus and grow in all kinds of knowledge.

Pray for our disciples to continue to serve God and spread His Gospel.

GATHERING LITTLE LAMBS

Each year at VBS we get the question, “How do you get all the kids?” First we pass out fliers all over our neighborhood. We get our exercise going up and down streets, seeing the neighborhood, and sometimes greeting people on the streets. The actual gathering of the little ones requires much more than getting the word out. Some of the children walk from home, some get dropped off by parents, but most get picked up by our church vans and some borrowed from other churches. This is not an automatic process.



Closing at the end of day

Here is our approximate timeline for arranging rides: 2 months before VBS we figure out how many vans we have and recruit drivers for the 8 days over two weeks. 1 month before we contact kids who have come in the last two years’ VBS and pass out permission slips. 2 weeks before we start collecting permission slips and organize van lists according to where the children live. 1 week before we match drivers with “guides” from Military Ave. who know the neighborhood. Days 1 and 2 of VBS we figure out where to put “extra” children who show up and need a ride.

Thankfully, we have several dedicated drivers who come year after year and know the neighborhood and some of the children. Also, it is a blessing to see how friendships develop between the drivers and our Military Ave. volunteers.



Bible study—Moses

This shows how God uses every gift and part of the Body of Christ to help our efforts to share the Gospel of Jesus with our community. Many people make sacrifices of time, vacation days, and travel to help us continue to minister and reach out to our youth and families.



Craft time

WE WRESTLE NOT AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD

Different kinds of struggles come in ministry. We experienced some challenges in the winter and spring of 2022. It started with five break-ins in our shed and the loss of much of our lawn equipment and a snow blower. The thieves pried back large steel bars that protected our shed. Then in the spring on the first warm day our AC in the Café did not work. I asked a friend to check it out and he came back saying someone took the condenser units off the roof. A couple days later we discovered that one of our 15 passenger vans had been stolen. The police found it with all the doors, front seats, and tires missing.



Our AC units

Following these events we spent a lot of time putting up security lights and cameras. The construction on the Gordy Howe bridge has left our property on an island an easy target. Praise God Jesus taught us to put our treasure in Heaven where thieves do not break in, though such thefts leave us a little less secure in our work. Every time I go to the church I walk to a vantage point to see if our AC condensers are still there.



Also the construction around our neighborhood causes daily stress with a constant changing of roads closed by MDOT. Then this Fall they moved a crane behind our gym and have been pounding steel plates about forty feet into the ground. All day we feel the vibration and hear the constant sounds of screeching metal and pounding. As with all major construction projects dirt rains down on us. We probably have a couple more years of this.