

## Answering the WHY of Church on the Street

by Rebel Hurd

Whether we are out on the streets, visiting with a congregation or at a meeting of people who gather to discuss services that are already provided to the marginalized homeless community, the question we are asked most often is, “Why?” Why? Why not just invite everyone to church and call it good. Well, this might work for the new family that moves in across the street from you, maybe. Do people still deliver welcome baskets to new neighbors? It has been 16 years since I have moved, but at that time, each local church brought a gift and invited us to attend worship with them. Well, we like to think of ourselves as the welcome wagon of street Ministry. We introduce ourselves, listen to their entire life story, share kind words about how happy we are to have met them and then invite them to join us in Ministry. We don’t ask the homeless to come to a worshipping community where they may not be able to read the bulletin or be uncomfortable about how long it has been since they have had a shower and wonder what the people sitting next to them might be thinking. We don’t ask them to put money into a basket, because we know their pockets are light, and they need the little money that they have, not to buy a Starbucks, but to live. We don’t expect them to know when to stand, what to say when they “share the peace” or make small talk after worship. We expect none of these things. Church on the Street’s expectations are solely with the Holy Spirit. The work being done is The Holy Spirit surrounding us with compassion, acceptance and understanding that whatever has or will happen, they are whole and loved by God, through us, his disciples.

Church on the Street is a church whose mission and reality is to minister to, with, and for the homeless community that is often overlooked and forgotten. As people of Christ, it is our work to tell people about the Good News and to build a faith community where God’s people seek hope that is found only in the message of Jesus Christ while finding encouragement, purpose and strength. One unique aspect of Church on the Street is that it is a church without walls. We meet people at their point of need, and attempt to love and serve each one of them, and in doing so, preach a powerful Gospel message. We are blessed to not be the first street Church in the ELCA; there are 42. This allows us the opportunity to learn from, lean on and be encouraged by groups of like-minded people with a passion to serve.

Although we are a Church without walls, we are sturdy. Church on the Street moves to suit the needs of the people. After all, the people are the Church. As we are out on the streets and sharing the Good News, we feel so much support from the Greater Church of the ELCA and the local congregations who are asking the why, spreading the word, and inviting their congregations to be a part of this powerful Ministry. As Church on the Street is a Synodically Authorized Worshiping Community (SAWC) of the ELCA, we will continue to carry out Christ’s Great Commission by reaching out to *ALL* people to bring them to faith in Christ. Please, take a moment, say a prayer, answer your own WHY and then join us in this amazing Ministry!

For more information please call **Rebel Hurd**, Mission Developer, at (605) 759-7869 or Email [rebel@peacelutheran.com](mailto:rebel@peacelutheran.com) or find us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ChurchontheStreetSiouxFalls](http://www.facebook.com/ChurchontheStreetSiouxFalls). We ask for your prayers of guidance, love, and generosity with those we encounter, housed or unhoused. We ask for your partnership in Ministry by allowing us to share Church on the Street with your congregation through temple talks followed by you joining Church on the Street, when we begin worship services, where we share a compassion for all of God’s people, whomever and wherever they are; to pray, sing, provide fellowship, reflect on the Gospel and break bread. Finally, funds to financially support this emerging, energetic and Christ centered Ministry are also needed. Please send donations to South Dakota Synod, ELCA, C/O Church on the Street, Augustana, University, 2001 South Summit Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD 59197.



**C**hrist centered community

**O**ffering a connection and compassion for *all* God’s people

**T**ogether we seek healing and Spiritual fulfillment

**S**erving through Word and Sacrament in Christian Community