

Churches: Our Everyday Superheroes

Stories of Hope and Inspiration from Our Churches Across the Country

Community Presbyterian Church in Lee Vining, CA

Community Presbyterian Church, located in Lee Vining California, created a special program called “Lee Vining Cares: Neighbors Helping Neighbors,” to specifically address the unfortunate impacts of COVID-19. With support from their local Superhero Lynn Boulton, the Church Treasurer, Community Presbyterian Church was able to assist members from their small town of 300.

Rev. Rebecca Watkins who submitted this story shared: “Our economy relies heavily on tourism. Most of our town folk are hardworking people, who work multiple jobs year-round.” Just about everyone in the town was affected by the pandemic as small businesses could not open, leaving most of the community members without employment.

In addition, there was one person hospitalized with COVID-19 which closed a local business that had just opened; employees were asked to stay home and shelter in place. When the stimulus checks arrived, “Several young adults in town wanted to give their stimulus checks to support our local families heavily impacted by COVID-19. This desire to give was the impetus for our new community non-profit,” said Rev. Rebecca Watkins. Prior to this outpouring of support there wasn’t an avenue to give directly to the community, Rev. Watkins knew just who to talk to about creating a non-profit within the ministry.

Lynn Boulton, a servant leader in the church and former schoolteacher, did not hesitate when asked to assist. She promptly worked to establish this new non-profit arm of the church. With her previous experience in the banking

industry and her giving heart as a former member of the Peace Corps, she was ready to serve the church in an expanded capacity. With support from the local community, Neighbors Helping Neighbors paid the rent and utilities for fifteen families in their town for several months, with one family still receiving that support today. Rev. Watkins shared, “To date, community members and others from surrounding areas have donated more than \$22,000.” In addition, they are continuously looking for ways to support those who have been impacted by COVID-19. “We could not have begun this non-profit without our Superhero Church Treasurer, Lynn” said Rev. Watkins. They are now looking for ways to support families in the future.

This small town, with one grocery store and two gas stations, is preparing for the end of the tourist season. They also plan to continue the “Lee Vining Cares: Neighbors Helping Neighbors” program after seeing its impact. With such a small, but generous population in the Eastern Sierra, the Community Presbyterian Church formed a board led by Paul McFarland and five others who gather by Zoom to talk about the needs in the community. They anticipate additional needs will arise in the slow season, and with the help of the congregation and the community, they are ready to address those needs. Rev. Watkins shared, “While we have several people who make this community service run smoothly; those who are out front and gathering the needs, it is Lynn who is our glue!”

Submitted by Reverend Rebecca Watkins