



LWML MISSION GRANT

HELPING HANDS INITIATIVE — LCMS NATIONAL HOUSING SUPPORT CORPORATION \$100,000

Lorraine Evans grew up in the Landsdowne neighborhood of East St. Louis just down the street from Unity Lutheran Church. She was walking by one of the houses under repair and asked about the project. After learning the story of Helping Hand Initiative working with the Lutheran church just down the street she said, “What a great idea!”

Unity Lutheran Church pastored by Dr. Willie Stallworth is leading the Landsdowne Community Initiative (LCI) to revitalize the Landsdowne neighborhood where their church is located. With the help of the Helping Hand Initiative and the LCMS National Housing Support Corporation, a large portion of this \$100,000 grant is at work here. The Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) and Laborers for Christ (LFC) both pitched in to help this older congregation. The leadership of Unity Lutheran directed the complete repair of eight homes with two additional homes almost finished. These are homes of the elderly and low-income in the neighborhood of their church. Pastor Stallworth worked with the recipients to coordinate the projects but more importantly to forge relationships with the

residents to meet their spiritual needs as well as their physical ones.

In Fremont, Nebraska, a homeowner had suffered a stroke and was unable to return home. Fifty years ago, Lorraine’s father had purchased the house for the young couple and she promised to keep the house for as long as she could. Through the work of Helping Hand Initiative, a wheelchair ramp and other numerous repairs were completed, allowing Bob to return home to his wife Lorraine. Now, as Lorraine said, thanks to Helping Hand Initiative, “I’m keeping my promise.”

Pastor David Coe at Trinity Lutheran Church in Fremont led the Helping Hand Initiative in this neighborhood. He led the congregation working with a community-based non-profit, Rebuilding Together Platte Valley East (RTPVE) and leveraging their resources to increase the impact of the grant and repair more houses than anticipated of low-income and elderly residents in their neighborhood. He enlisted the help of many volunteers including members of the congregation. Through these projects both congregations bear witness to the love and mercy of Christ in their desire to serve others.