



Grant #18: Zoe's Home Support Trinity Lutheran Church, Clinton, MO

BY EMILY STOCKING WITH MISSION EDITOR BRIANNE STAHLACKER



I vividly remember the day I called my pastor with my news. The Lord was telling me our church should start a homeless ministry in the house our congregation had been given. Bearing one another's

burdens is one thing, but to step out in faith — to this level — in small-town Missouri? My pastor was more than sure that the Lord had spoken, and we were to listen. Since that day, the road has not always been an easy one. Housing homeless, pregnant women as well as women with their children, comes with a significant number of burdens. However, walking alongside these women and children is an incredible blessing. The Lord has faithfully provided for all our needs. We have been blessed with numerous donors and grants that have made our work at Zoe's Home possible.

Women in our program are either pregnant or have a child under the age of three. To support their journey, we employ three part-time staff members and have a host of volunteers. While at Zoe's Home, women are met with the grace of Jesus, regardless of how long we have them. We want them to know, no matter where they are in their journey, they are loved and cared for, and we are honored to walk alongside them. Upon arrival in our program, residents establish long-term goals and short-term objectives to help them reach

their goals. Each resident participates in weekly case management, financial coaching, meal planning, cooking, household chores, parenting classes, Bible study, Celebrate Recovery, community mental health/substance abuse services, and employment services. Additionally, they must participate in all medical appointments for themselves and their children. Church attendance is also required. Once residents are stable in our environment, we encourage them to find gainful employment. Each resident is required to save half of her income to put toward large purchases, such as a car, or deposits for independent living. Residents are allowed to stay in our program as long as they are working toward their goals; for most women this is around nine months.

Over the last year, we were able to open a second home and are now able to house up to seven women and their children. Funds from the LWML Mission Grant have been used to help cover the cost of increased utilities, additional staffing needs, and supplying this new home with household items. The grant has been an incredible blessing for us because it has relieved some of the burden of fundraising and allows us to focus more of our attention on caring for these women and their children. *Q*

Emily Stocking is a Licensed Professional Counselor who felt the Lord's urging to begin a homeless ministry. Having spent her whole life loving babies and young children and seeing the need for housing for homeless, pregnant women and their children, Emily leaned into this idea and began a program for this exact population. She is the wife of Dillon and mom to three beautiful children — Kynlee, Jase, and Arnie.