

You will note this is a very similar article to the 2008 article that preceded it however the list did change in a short two years I think I may revisit this list again this fall and see what a difference a decade makes.

Smoky Mountain Reflections

December 2010—January 2011

Who do we help & why? Our congregation takes seriously *Blessed to share the blessing* and in response to God's great gifts to us as a congregation, we help others because we are free to do so as blessed children of God seeking to serve others for Him. We are very fortunate, and in response to God's great blessings, we have committed over 11% of our budget to help others outside our congregation. This does not account for all the personal acts of kindness and generosity this small congregation of 170 souls does in response to needs around them and the benefit to our community through congregational activities. Our motivation to do these things is not for recognition or even just because it makes us feel good. Those are just pleasant side affects of being given the opportunity to manage and to be generous stewards of that of which God has blessed us. Our motivation is to do what God calls us to do—to care for and love those in need around us and be Christ's instrument in our community and the world.

I know that we have seen regular notes in the newsletter and weekly announcements on many of these ministries, but I thought you might like see a summary of all the great things God is doing through us locally, regionally, nationally, and throughout the world. It is truly exciting to see God work in the lives of His people to care for the needs of others.

Locally: We help serve the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of those in need in our community and those who pass through our community with emergency needs, by praying for and providing substantial physical and financial support to: Mountain Hope Good Shepherd Clinic, Sevier County Food Ministries, Smoky Mountain Ares Rescue Ministry, Women's Care Center, & Sevier County Right To Life. There are many among us who also give of ourselves as volunteers in these organizations. We also allow the pastor a substantial discretionary fund used primarily to help those among us in need.

Regionally: Through Lutheran Campus Ministry we help provide sound confessional ministry and pastoral presence on the University of Tennessee Campus with a student population of over 25000.

Nationally: We help provide for the needs of those who are mentally and physically challenged through Bethesda Lutheran Homes. We also provide assistance to those training to become pastors through the Joint Seminary Fund, which supports both of our synod seminaries. We help support the military through Lutheran Military Veterans Family Ministry, and we also support Lutheran Blind Mission.

Internationally: We help feed hungry children in Lutheran schools in Haiti. We help those who do not yet have God's word in their language through Lutheran Bible Translators. We assist our church body with world outreach efforts by supporting Lutheran World Mission and we have made special collections for assistance with disaster relief efforts and regular human care through LCMS, Human Care & World Relief. We helped with recent emergency efforts in Haiti through the Haiti Seminary Fund and we help children all over the world through Lutheran schools by supporting the Christian Children's Concern Society.

As you can see we have been blessed with the opportunity to love and care for the needs of many people in our community and far beyond. I am convinced that much of our continued health and growth both spiritually and with some of the newest additions to our church family, especially in light of the many struggles in our society and economy, is due to our faithful stewardship of His gifts and the outward focus of our efforts. All this while standing firm on the revealed truths in Gods word, without compromise, speaking the truth in love and spreading the sweet Gospel in its purity and truth for all to receive the gift of saving faith, as God intended, through proclamation of His word and administration of His sacraments.

Your fellow worker in Christ,
Pastor Portier