

Rejoice Always: Sharing with Our Neighbors



There's a phrase you might have heard at some point in your life – maybe your parent or teacher even told you – “sharing is caring”. This week, we rejoice in sharing with our neighbors. So far in 2021, we have distributed over \$27,000 to our community partners. An additional \$47,000 has been shared with the New Jersey Synod, half of which goes to ELCA Churchwide to support mission and ministry throughout the US and the world. This is certainly something to celebrate – and absolutely give us reason to rejoice!

- *Visions and Pathways is incredibly grateful for the continued support from Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. Through both their financial and physical donations, the youth at Visions and Pathways have been able to celebrate their holidays with a little more joy, go to school with book bags packed with supplies and enjoy several field trips with their peers. These are all things that help our youth feel loved and supported and for that we thank you.*

www.visionsandpathways.org

- *At Safe+Sound Somerset, helping survivors find hope is at the core of our work. We exist so that survivors of domestic abuse or sexual violence never feel alone, and know that compassionate professional help is only a phone call or text away. Thanks so much for your continued support and advocacy for us – we are so grateful. **Michele Boronkas, Executive Director, Safe & Sound Somerset***
- *The congregational network of HOME of Somerset County remains invaluable in our community approach to help stabilize homeless and low-income/at-risk families. The support of Good Shepherd contributes to programming that addresses the most basic of human needs, including shelter and food security. GSLC's investment in assisting families build healthy foundations is helping over 100 individuals, the majority being children, in their journey towards mental and physical wellness and housing security. **Alyssa Martini, Executive Director, HOME of Somerset County***

One of the gifts we have in coming together as community is recognizing the greater difference our dollars make when they are brought together and then shared with others. Because of your financial offering, we are able to help make a difference in the lives of so many more than we could ever do on our own.

Our God calls us together, calls us to serve our neighbors, calls us to rejoice always – especially as we celebrate our shared work.

Take some time this week to reflect on how you see God in our community. What are some ways you can participate in this meaningful, joined work?

In Christ, *Pastor Chelsea*

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PLACE GOD FIRST IN YOUR BUDGETING AND SPENDING

The Ten Commandments stress that God must be first in our lives. And Jesus said, “Seek first God’s kingdom and righteousness and all these things shall be yours as well.” (*Matthew 6:33*)

Many experience difficulty giving generously despite the desire and pledge to do so, because they attempt to give from what is left over at the end of the week or month rather than from first fruits, from all they have received.

The simple practice of placing God and The Church first in budgeting and spending has helped many to experience joy in their giving. When you do this you are giving from all that a good and loving God has provided. And you are practicing stewardship, understanding that you are but a temporary trustee of what God has entrusted to you.

