

From Sister Mary . . .

Dear Friends,

“Blessed is the one who cares for the poor.” is what God proclaims in Psalm 41.

But what kind of “blessing” is promised? For me the blessing of caring for the poor is internal and only reveals itself in time. Caring for the poor gives you a clear, even frightening, glimpse into your own heart. You recognize your own prejudices and judgements, your own weaknesses and limitations... and that’s a blessing. You recognize how much you need mercy and forgiveness for the hardness of heart buried deep inside you...and that’s a blessing. Hopefully, as the years pass, and you interact closely with the poor, you become more compassionate, quick to forgive and less prone to judge...and that’s a blessing. Your friendship with the poor may even awaken you to act against unjust systems that guarantee poverty for many,

riches for a few...and that’s a blessing. In this newsletter we’ve highlighted a few Emmaus people who care for the poor and have received this rich internal blessing of softness of heart, coupled with a righteousness of steel.

But now and then there’s a surprise. Sometimes you see a visible blessing poured on one who cares for the poor. That happened to Kitty and Harvey Welton on their 50th wedding celebration. Kitty and Harvey have volunteered at the soup kitchen for over 20 years and have been pillars of the place during the pandemic.

Because their three children know how devoted they are to Emmaus, they contacted me and said they’d like to pay for a special meal for soup kitchen guests to mark the anniversary. So, in late summer, Kitty and Harvey’s children, their friends, and the entire Emmaus staff gathered at the kitchen to raise a glass of champagne in their honor. (Yes, we practiced social distancing.) We had big signs on the windows and doors with the couple’s picture and the words: “This special meal is given in honor of Kitty and Harvey Welton’s 50th wedding anniversary.” Our guests were touched to receive so many “extras” in their take-away dinners, including specially baked cookies with icing that read “Happy 50th, Kitty and Harvey!”

It was quite a tribute, a visible way of saying, “Blessed are you, Kitty and Harvey, who care for the poor.” Blessed, indeed.

In Peace,

Sister Mary



Sister Mary



Kitty and Harvey Welton

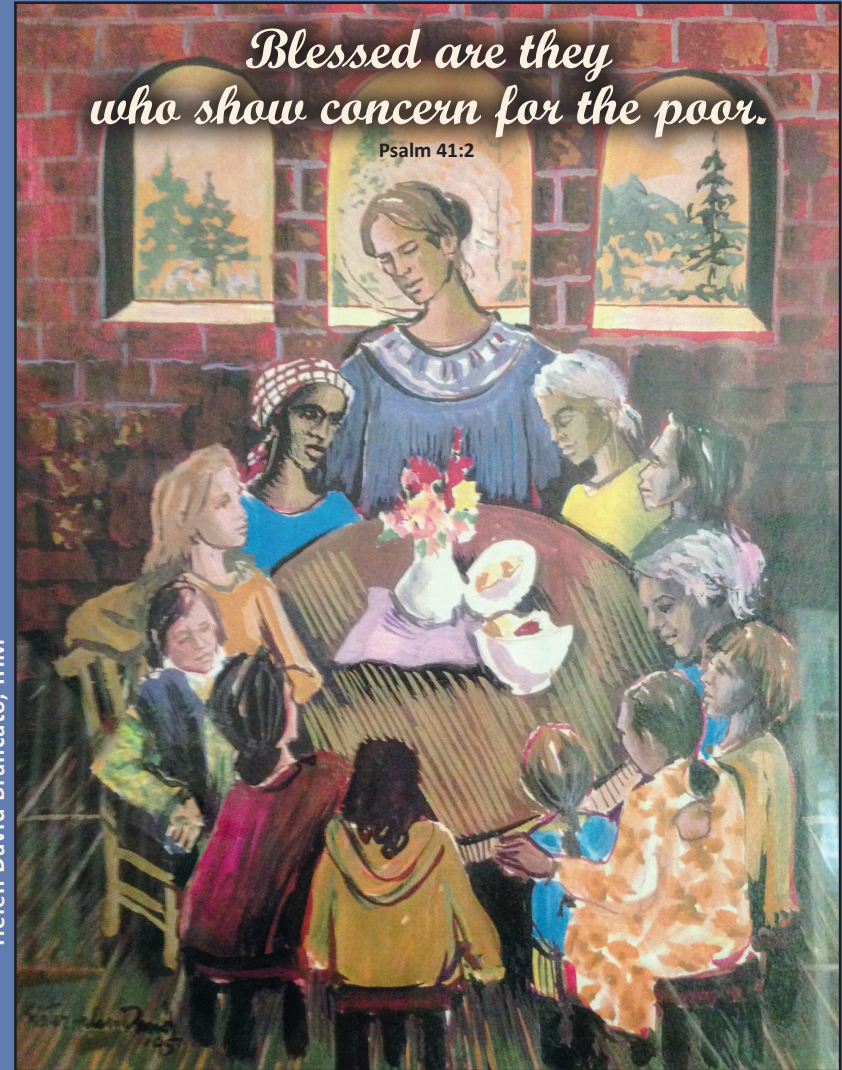


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*Blessed are they
who show concern for the poor.*

Psalm 41:2



Helen David Brancato, IHM

Blessed are they who show concern for the poor.

by Sister Valerie Luckey

“VAL, ARE YOU DOING ANYTHING RIGHT NOW?” Sister Rosanne Lindal-Hynes asks me, and instinct tells me I am about to go on an adventure. The adventure that day was a trip to Wal-Mart. A family—a mother and her three children—recently moved to Erie from out of state, leaving an abusive relationship. The family had nothing when they arrived here, nothing except an empty apartment and each other.

Sister Rosanne had already given them dishes, silverware, and other household items, but they didn't have beds and were sleeping on the floor. We needed to get them air mattresses and sheets.

This is nothing new for Sister Rosanne; this is her life as the Women's Advocate at Emmaus Ministries. Since I started working at Emmaus last December, I have answered the phone time and time again. So often the first words I hear are, “Hello, may I speak with Sister Rosanne?” I give her the message, and she faithfully returns the call,

sees how she can help—whether it's with specific items like dishes, or financial help with a rent or utility bill—and then she offers whatever she can. It's not a big, grandiose experience; she sits at a small desk in a small office that she shares with someone else and keeps track of the people she has helped in a 3"x5" notebook that she calls her “computer.”

After we chose air mattresses and colorful bedding that we thought each family member might like, she wanted to look at a pair of shorts for herself. She held up a pair to her waist, and then said to me, “Do I really need these? No, I don't.” She put them back, and we went to pay. Since the apartment was on the way home, we delivered the mattresses and sheets to the family. It was pouring rain. The mom and I were quickly drenched as we ran with all the bags from the car trunk to the door of the apartment.

When we arrived back at the office, Sister Rosanne said to me, “Well, at least we got another family off the floor.”

That's it. That's the entire motive. Help others. Show them love. Live the gospel. Sister Rosanne's commitment to the poor is well known to many, and everyone on the street knows her name, but it's this quiet, constant love that she shows for the poor that breaks open my own heart, quietly and constantly.

Sister Valerie Luckey is the Ministry Assistant at Emmaus Ministries.



Sister Rosanne Lindal-Hynes (left) and Sister Valerie Luckey

Blessed are they who show concern for the poor.

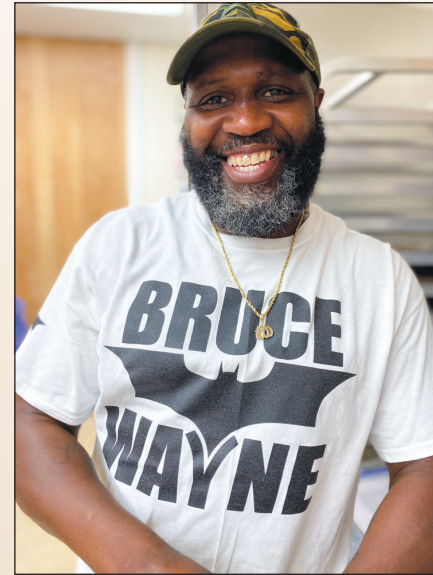
by Catherine Simon

IF I HAD STARTED WORKING FOR EMMAUS before the Covid-19 pandemic began, my evenings at the soup kitchen would have looked much different: guests walking through the food line and choosing what they wanted to eat, volunteers greeting them and asking how they are doing, people sitting down next to each other to dine, and Blue Coat volunteers talking to everyone they encountered and helping to create a peaceful atmosphere. But, the scene is much different these days: volunteers are spread out behind the counter as they put food in to-go boxes, someone pushes the

boxes on a cart across the dining room to replenish dwindling stacks of containers, and Blue Coat volunteers hand out those containers to guests through a window.

When I started at the soup kitchen in early summer, I was immediately touched to see the commitment of Bruce Wayne, one of our Blue Coat volunteers, who has been faithful to the soup kitchen daily, not only before the pandemic, but especially now that there is greater risk involved in this ministry. Bruce Wayne, also known as “Batman,” has the most direct contact with the greatest number of people each night, and he has a toddler running around the house when he gets home.

“Everything is a struggle during this pandemic, but we must keep showing up. Being a Blue Coat is a ministry



Bruce Wayne, aka “Batman”

for me, and this is what we do. This is a way that I can serve God,” Bruce told me. I had asked him about the reasons he continues to serve while serving others might sometimes feel less safe than usual. He reminded me that in the Bible Jesus tells us that seeds do not grow on stony ground, and one way to create good soil is to help those who need it most. “And even though people miss associating with the staff and one another, we are still meeting a need,” Bruce answered.

Just as Batman protects the people in his city, Bruce both protects and serves the poor in the city of Erie by literally serving them a hot meal each night of the week.

Catherine Simon is the Soup Kitchen and Food Pantry Coordinator at Emmaus Ministries.

Blessed are they who show concern for the poor.

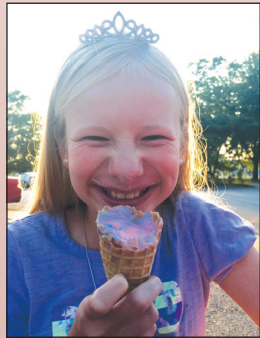
by Jacqueline Sanchez-Small

YOU COULD EASILY LOSE SLEEP worrying about the climate crisis—I know I do. But I found some hope on a hot morning in late July, looking at more than one hundred pairs of shoes that had been carefully arranged in neat rows by a handful of elementary and junior high Neighborhood Art House students, organizing their first political demonstration. This was a “shoe strike” against climate change and the policies that worsen it. Because the pandemic makes it dangerous to gather large numbers of people, each pair of shoes—contributed by the students’ friends and families, Benedictine Sisters, and other community members—was meant to represent someone who would be marching for environmental protections if it were safe to be physically present.



Shoes lined up in front of the Neighborhood Art House

The children who organized the strike—including my oldest goddaughter, Makiah, who was turning 14 that day—were inspired by Sister Pat Lupo, their teacher at the Art House, and by youth activist Greta Thunberg’s Fridays for Future movement. And they were passionate about the earth, especially the animals, ecosystems, and people who will suffer as the planet warms. Their message was clear: the earth must be protected and respected, because they want their future to have beauty and possibility.



Makiah Ramsey

Makiah and the other student organizers may be on the cusp of adolescence, but there’s no trace of them growing disaffected or flippant. Maybe it’s because they’ve been steeped in Benedictine values from years of being nourished at the Art House and the Kids Cafe. Makiah told me that she’s learned from the teachers there that every voice matters, and that the environment is everyone’s responsibility, and that

there’s no excuse for sitting idly by, waiting for others to solve a problem. She and her friends are fired up to make more signs, to lead more chants, and to talk to everyone around them about why the planet is worth saving. So when things look bleak, I’ll remember the passion they’re carrying into the future.

Jacqueline Sanchez-Small is a postulant with the Benedictine Sisters of Erie.

For the Record . . .

Emmaus Ministries Says Goodbye to Shirley Whaley

After over eight years working at Emmaus Soup Kitchen, Shirley Whaley retired in August. Faithful and committed, Shirley cooked daily meals, coordinated schedules for others to come and prepare dinners, worked with countless volunteers, and above all, was a steadfast presence for soup kitchen guests. Sister Valerie, an Emmaus staff member, sat down with Shirley to ask her about her time working for Emmaus.

HOW DID YOU BEGIN WORKING AT EMMAUS SOUP KITCHEN?

Shirley: I was working at the House of Healing, a transitional program for women coming out of incarceration, and that closed in spring 2011. Sister Mary called me between Thanksgiving and Christmas that year and said that she was looking for someone to come cook at the soup kitchen. I told her: “The job sounds perfect for me. I’ll take it.”



Catherine Simon, Emmaus Food Pantry and Soup Kitchen Coordinator, with Shirley Whaley, retiring Soup Kitchen Coordinator and cook

WHO TAUGHT YOU HOW TO COOK?

I went to Reddy Kilowatt Cooking School when I was in first grade. It was held at a hardware store at Warren County. I have been cooking from the time I was five years old. When I belonged to the fire department in Youngsville, PA, I worked for functions held there. The woman in charge had a massive heart attack and called to tell me I was in charge! Her husband brought all the recipe books to me, and so I taught myself to cook in large quantities.

IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT MAKES EMMAUS UNIQUE?

Emmaus not only serves the poor, but its guests have a place that many call their home or their church. The guests feel like the staff and volunteers care about them.

For the rest of the interview with Shirley, visit www.emmauserie.org.

For the Record, cont'd. . . .

THE CENSUS COMES TO EMMAUS MINISTRIES

Every person counts. Emmaus Ministries is helping to ensure that our guests are counted in the 2020 Census. Since the end of July, representatives from the US Census Bureau have come to both the food pantry and soup kitchen to help guests complete the census online.

Linda Treese is both a census staff member and Emmaus volunteer. She helped to coordinate the effort to be on site, saying: "We are only at a 60% completion rate in the county, and the section of the county with the lowest engagement is right here in the city. We are trying to push participation because of the money received per person through the census. It's used to serve the citizens."

Emmaus Ministries serves a population that often goes unnoticed and uncounted. With the presence of census representatives on site, the guests served by Emmaus are being acknowledged and included. "Person by person we are getting there," Treese added.



Linda Treese collects census information from a soup kitchen guest



KIDS CAFE STAFF CONTINUES TO SUPPORT FAMILIES

With the help of Emmaus Soup Kitchen and Second Harvest Food Bank, families from the Kids Cafe continue to enjoy meals while unable to attend the program due to Covid-19. Throughout the summer, Kids Cafe Coordinator, Stephanie Grear, along with staff members, Ebony King and Irvina Salter, have packed and delivered boxes of food to the families of children who attend Sister Gus' Kids Cafe on many occasions, with special holiday boxes for Memorial Day and Independence Day. "Seeing the delight of the families when we arrive with another delivery brings me equal delight," Stephanie said.

Irvina delivers food to families

EMMAUS AWARDED \$95,000 STATE GRANT

Wasting food is not an option when so many are hungry. At the end of May, Emmaus Food Pantry was awarded \$95,000 from the Food Recovery Infrastructure grant of Governor Wolf's Administration aimed at supporting nonprofit food pantries

to fight hunger and prevent food waste.

The funds were used to buy the food pantry a new box truck and replace the aging walk-in freezer. "The new freezer, in particular, will enable us to accept more perishable food donations and prevent unnecessary waste of food when so many are in need," said Margaret Kloecker, Associate Director of Emmaus Ministries. Emmaus Food Pantry serves 550 families in the city of Erie each week.

The Wolf Administration awarded over \$9 million to 145 food banks, soup kitchens, and churches across the state, including \$70,902 to Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest PA—the food bank that supplies food to Emmaus Food Pantry.

2020 CROP WALK

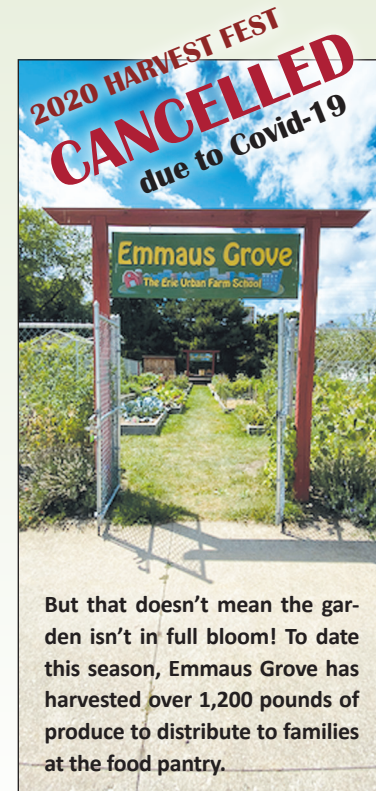
Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this year's CROP Walk will be a virtual event held on September 27th. The annual CROP Walk raises money to support efforts that relieve hunger and poverty across the globe. Emmaus receives a portion of the proceeds from the money raised for the Erie Walk. For more information about walking options, to donate to the CROP Walk, or to learn more about the event, visit www.crophungerwalk.org/eriepa.

CROP HUNGER WALK
ENDING HUNGER ONE STEP AT A TIME

ERIE GIVES 2020

"It's hard to believe that Emmaus Ministries had thirty-seven dollars in our bank account when we began!" said Sister Mary upon learning that Emmaus received \$91,000 during

Erie Gives 2020, a 12-hour online and check fundraiser. Erie Gives is an annual day of fundraising that supports non-profits within the area. Emmaus ranked in the top ten of total number of donors and the top fifteen in total donations. This event is a project of the Erie Community Foundation, and as Sister Mary added, "It just goes to show how much Erie citizens care about the good work being done all over the city. We are grateful."



But that doesn't mean the garden isn't in full bloom! To date this season, Emmaus Grove has harvested over 1,200 pounds of produce to distribute to families at the food pantry.

We Give Thanks . . .

LET US GIVE THANKS FOR . . .

Andy Shufan, Melanie Shufan, and Ralph Edes for supplying “to-go” containers and other pantry staples to the soup kitchen . . . **Mask-Erie** for donating 600 masks to give away to guests . . . **AmeriHealth Caritas** for giving a \$400 grant to Emmaus Grove to purchase supplies for the growing season and \$2,500 to support the food pantry . . . **Erie Insurance employees** for donating 100 handmade masks . . . **Majestic Bakery** for donating loaves of bread . . . **St. Mark’s Episcopal Church** for donating 100 adult masks and 60 children masks to distribute . . . **The Good360 Program** for donating candy for food delivery to Kids Cafe families . . . **Jack Holland** for donating Dairy Queen ice cream cakes . . . **Little Caesars** for giving 50 \$5 gift certificates to give away.



Nancy Fahey, from AmeriHealth Caritas, at Emmaus Grove

In Memory

We are grateful to family members who asked that memorials be made to Emmaus in the names of their deceased loved ones:

Patricia Anne Copenhaver
Joseph A. DiBuono
Michael D. DiSanti
Patricia M. Gregoroff
John A. Jagodzinski

Thomas John Kasinec
Linda Griffith Kester
Leona Grace Fayas Mack
Joseph V. Martone
Calvin “Cal” L. Pointer

COVER ART: Helen David Brancato, IHM is a painter, printmaker and illustrator whose work carries themes of justice, peace and homelessness.

STAFF: Mary Miller, OSB; Margaret Kloecker; Rosanne Lindal-Hynes, OSB; Rita Scrimenfi; Stephanie Grear; Breanna Mekuly; Valerie Luckey, OSB; and Catherine Simon
Companion Editor, Mary Lou Kownacki, OSB; Layout, Judy Allison

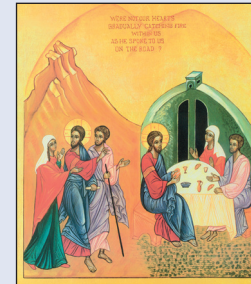


345 East Ninth Street • Erie, PA 16503-1107



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EMMAUS ICON
Icon *Road to Emmaus*
Iconographer: Sister Marie-Paul, OSB
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They came to know Christ in the breaking of the bread.

Luke 24:35