

## Our call to Action

I wanted to share with all of you a wonderful experience my family has been a part of for the last several years. The idea started during lent about five years ago. A church I attended previously, encouraged people in the congregation to “take on” something during lent instead of giving something up. The idea was to take on a self-sacrificing project that really put the love of Christ “in action” within the surrounding community. I thought about this idea over a season (or two) and was really moved to action Thanksgiving of 2007. I was trying to teach my 3 yr. old about giving, thoughtfulness, and the love of Jesus. I was feeling called towards the homeless in our community but felt overwhelmed by the problem. What would really make a difference? Who would I serve? How do I go about even starting this task to which I felt called?

God spoke to me and said, “Just care for my people. Love them. Do something.” He planted the idea of care packages. So that winter, my daughter and I packed 12 small lunch bags with water, apples, granola bars and gum. Whenever we would see someone on the street, I would roll down the window and hand them a bag. My goal was to look each one in the eyes and tell them that, “God loved them.” After the first couple of bags, my daughter would get so excited to see a person who was homeless, because she wanted to hand out the bags and say, “Jesus loves you!” I felt this was good but something was nagging at me...this was not enough. Although I was addressing people’s physical hunger I was not addressing their spiritual hunger. I started asking each person’s name and how I could pray for them. Then my daughter and I would pray for them during bedtime prayers. This was at least a start.

We continued this new tradition during lent and then the following year during Thanksgiving/Christmas. Over the years the contents and number of bags has grown. Last year I asked my extended family to make bags with us. The result was 30 large bags that each of us took back to our respective cities to share with the hungry. Every year, both of my daughters get so excited about our “mass bag making” that they talk about it for weeks, as we gather supplies. It is such a joyful time! Now, we try to keep a bag or two in the car for whenever the opportunity arises. This is a simple idea that most of us can do!

I have thought for a year now, how wonderful it would be to extend this ministry to our church family. I can just picture us gathering supplies each Sunday for several weeks and having a “Bag Party”! Then going out into our communities armed with food bags to give away, the love of Christ, and a call to action! It seems as if this is the perfect season to bring this to our church family and ministry. We have studied hunger in our bible study, our devotionals, our quiet time, and special outings. Have these offerings stirred in us a desire, a hunger, to reach out to God’s people and care for them the way He does? My prayer is that the answer to that question is YES!!! We are ready to put the love of Christ in action! So here’s the plan.....

We are asking everyone in the congregation to gather these supplies each Sunday until Pentecost, at which time we will have our "Bag Party". Then each family/person will take some bags and distribute them during the weeks following. Our goal is not only to feed God's people, but more importantly to care for them. We are the body of Christ, so let's get moving!

April 11<sup>th</sup>: Water bottles & small bags of nuts

April 18<sup>th</sup>: Granola and /or energy bars

April 25<sup>th</sup>: Hand sanitizer (pocket size), & tuna or salmon pouch

May 2<sup>nd</sup>: Toothbrushes and travel size toothpaste

May 9<sup>th</sup>: Dried fruit or fruit leathers

May 16<sup>th</sup>: Small bibles (dollar store has these)

May 23<sup>rd</sup>: Pentecost Feast and bag making party!

"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God." Hebrews 13:2,16

"For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that by His poverty you might become rich. And in this matter I am giving my advice: it is appropriate for you who began last year not only to do something but even to desire to do something- now finish it, so that your eagerness may be matched by completing it according to your means." 2 Corinthians 8:9-11