



The CommUUnicator

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Waynesboro

The Faces of Hunger

By Ann Majure

Data from the Blue Ridge Food Bank indicate that one in twelve people in our local area do not have enough to eat. They must choose between buying food and paying for housing, between buying food and buying medicine, between buying food and paying to heat their houses. Hunger Free America reported that in city of Waynesboro, 17.6 % of children do not have enough to eat. Food Free America noted that between October 2021 and October 2022 there was an overall increase of 13.1% of people in Waynesboro who have to worry about their next meal. (The national average is 9.3%.) The data is consistent and clear—some of our neighbors are hungry, and the situation seems to be worsening.

I have never had to face the difficult choices that some of our neighbors have to face every day. Like many of us, I have had times in my life when I had to live very frugally, but I never missed a meal or lacked housing. I may not always have liked where I had to live and my food options, but at least, I did have options. It's easy to read statistics with an intellectual, disconnected mindset. Over the past few months, the people reflected by these statistics have begun to have faces for me. They are not just some people out there. They are standing right in front of me and asking for help—no matter how hard it is for them or how ashamed some seem to be.

In November 2022, the Social Justice Team surveyed the Fellowship to learn what areas of need are priorities. Food insecurity was identified as the top priority, with housing insecurity a close second. Our Fellowship has a long history of working in this area with food donations and volunteering at the Verona Food Pantry. The Social Justice Team decided we needed to do more and built a pantry box at the Fellowship. Keeping the box stocked with food continues to be a challenge. No matter how many times a week we add food, the box stays near empty most of the time. Recently, when Renee Herrell was filling the box, a woman stopped by and expressed her gratitude. She said that she was helping raise her grandchildren and our pantry box really helped her. Renee encouraged her to take more food, but she seemed reluctant to take too much. There is no way to know how many people taking the food are genuinely in need. We know at least one family is benefiting from our effort and is grateful. Sometimes that's all we need to know.

In late December, the Fellowship led by the Social Justice team assisted WARM in providing a hot meal for their guests who are homeless and staying at shelters in the area. That evening we served food and visited with the guests. They were people just like us for whom life circumstances had dealt a difficult hand. They were not the "other." They were our neighbors.

Recently, a number of us from the Fellowship worked at the Verona Food Pantry. Over the years, the numbers who come to the pantry have varied. Some months it has been busy but not overwhelmingly so. At our January volunteer day, we were all a bit shocked by the numbers of people who came. A line formed well before we opened the doors and did not stop coming until the door was locked at closing time. There were so many people we had difficulty keep the shelves stocked and actually ran out of some of the frozen meat items. There seemed to be a number of people there for the first time. Members of the Fellowship who have volunteered at the Pantry for years said they had never seen this many people.

While the new media reports on inflation, cost of food, and the generally precarious state of the economy, it is easy to become numb to all this. My recent experiences with actual people who are experiencing food insecurity have put faces on the statistics. Food insecurity is not some abstract issue. It is real people who are doing the best they can to survive and take care of their families. I hope I never lose sight of these faces.

New Art on Our Walls

By Maribeth Nolde

Art On Our Walls, part of the Worship Arts Team here at UUFW, presents a new art show beginning March 5 and ending April 30th. The title is “Quilts—Comfort and No Comfort (Thinking of Ukraine).” Our new artist is Judy Anderson, a member of the Fellowship, who began quilting 50 years ago. Quilting began as a hobby and continued throughout her career



in architecture and interior design. Around 1995, she began painting in watercolor and later acrylic, with several shows of her work and sales through galleries in New England. Most of her quilts have used traditional designs, but she also enjoys experimenting with contemporary techniques. A friend, who died two years ago, left her a lot of uncompleted projects. Judy adopted some of the “orphans” and has been incorporating those blocks and pieces into new designs. These include all of the quilts that are in the show as part of the Ukraine series, except “Sunflowers,” which was made four years ago. All but one of the quilts are not for sale, but to be experienced and enjoyed by attendees throughout the next two months.



Spring comes early to the Fellowship!

