



A Local Council of Churches Gets in the Act!

Fairport-Perinton Churches Complete Another Successful Drive

Since the fall of 2001, the Fairport-Perinton Lay Clergy Council has made a community-wide TOOLS & BLANKETS offering a part of their annual programming. They raised over \$8,000 in 2005 and almost \$10,000 in 2004. The beauty of this project is that because it is sponsored by the interfaith council, many participate that wouldn't ordinarily do so, including the local synagogue.

It was another great year for the TOOLS & BLANKET program at the Fairport-Perinton Lay Clergy Council in Rochester, NY. We are comprised of thirteen churches and one synagogue. How did we do it? We took a variety of approaches.

One congregation used the theme, Blanket the World with Love, emphasizing the personal aspect of this program, which allows the giver to offer comfort to someone in need across the world or here at home. Throughout Advent a Church World Service blanket was draped in the rear of the sanctuary so people could pin their contributions on it.

At another Perinton congregation, a speaker with her daughter demonstrated the many ways the Church World Service blanket could be used in a disaster situation – as a tent, a partition for privacy, a knapsack, or as bedding. As a conclusion, the speaker wrapped the blanket around her daughter, and together they walked down the aisle of the church with baskets for donations.

A third congregation pitched the blanket as a tent with a volunteer sitting in front of it, ready to hand out Church World Service brochures and answer questions about the many places the blankets had been sent over the past year. Other congregations made their blanket drives the focal point of a special time of the liturgical year, collecting donations before weekly Lenten Simple Suppers or as a special Mother's Day offering.

In each case, planning ahead was a key to our success. We used CWS materials for bulletin inserts and newsletters so the congregations were well informed about the program. Children's sermons emphasized why blankets were important. Scheduling with missions or social ministry committees avoided competing with other outreach programs. Also key to our success was having actual blankets on hand. Our Council purchased six blankets so that all our congregations had the opportunity to see and feel the blankets that Church World Service distributes.

As our blanket drives drew to a close this summer, we heard a touching story about an indigent woman here in Rochester. She was brought into the emergency room of one of our local hospitals wrapped in a Church World Service blanket, and she refused to be parted from it.



Church World Service blankets touch peoples' lives in ways we will never know. Our thanks to those at Church World Service who will be there to distribute the blankets wherever and whenever there are people in crisis.

— *Amelia Seiler*
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