COVID-19: Serving the Needy in Jesus’ Name
by Pastor Bill Slack

The River of Life Food Pantry has been a part of our diaconal ministry practically since the church began. It has evolved over the years from an occasional ministry to its present form, serving the community twice a month on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month.

While the distribution itself is about 2 hours, far more hours are needed for that distribution to take place. Orders from NORWESCAP (our primary food provider) have to be placed, food pickups arranged, other sources of food (of which there are quite a few) coordinated with, as well as records of our distribution being maintained and updated and reports filed with NORWESCAP. (https://nwrwescap.org/)

Along with those responsibilities, we have a few folks who are on “housing” support – which means they have to do community service. The hours they put in also need to be recorded and reported. In all of this, we thank the Lord for providing Stefanie Dowson, our Food Pantry Coordinator extraordinaire! She has been using her administrative gifts to make all of this happen, while holding down a full time job, and sharing life with her husband Robert, who is also her “right hand man” in this ministry.

Before Corona, we would typically have about 110 to 120 family units come to the pantry. In that context, our facility would be “re-fitted” to accommodate those folks who came for food. Tables would be set up with the items on it, and a line would be formed through which people would pass, collecting the items they wanted. Prior to the start of the pantry, I would give a short Gospel presentation and pray for the ministry. During the event, I would be available for prayer as well. In addition, we have our own “Heaven & Hell” machine – a copy of the Boardwalk Chapel’s device which is up and running as well.

Continue reading on our website: opcstm.org/2020/08/13/river-of-life-food-pantry-how-one-church-is-serving-the-needy-in-jesus-name/