

Madison Heights Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)

 149 Main Street
Madison Heights, VA 24572

MADISON HEIGHTS MESSENGER

No. 15

September 21, 2022

George B. Harris, Minister
Email: bernerdharris@yahoo.com
mhcc16@yahoo.com
Church Telephone: (434) 845-3855
Minister's Telephone: (434) 215-4846

Pam Hubbard
Music Director

Brenda Harris
Administrative Assistant

Christian Initiative

When I was in seminary I had more reading to do than time allowed. This means that a lot of books were skimmed over instead of being read. I saved the books that I found to be either interesting or beneficial and filed them away with the intent of reading them from time to time in order to enhance my knowledge and understanding. While I was reading a book from a *pastoral care* class I decided to save it for this newsletter article and perhaps some other newsletter articles in the future. However, after taking an internship in Clinical Pastoral Education, I now think it is better to approach the subject *pastoral care* from the perspective of *spiritual care* because the care comes from the whole realm of religion, not just that of pastors.

There is one chapter in the book that addressed a concept called *pastoral initiative*. Once again, I prefer to change the common title for one that is more appropriate and call it *Christian initiative* because taking the initiative in the realm of the Christian faith is not limited to pastors but includes all Christians. The chapter mentioned examples that various people took to help others when they were in need. One such example dealt with a medical emergency when it was thought one student may be having a heart attack. A group of students took action instead of standing around watching, doing nothing, and waiting for rescue to arrive. One student became a coordinator and directed teamwork, another called 911, another trained in CPR stayed close by, a former nurse came and assisted, some students became hall monitors to keep the path way clear for rescue, and students went to each entrance in order to direct rescue personnel. Another example of Christian initiative was when women of a church reached out to make a connection with college students by baking cookies for them instead of waiting to find out if any college students were lonely.

The lesson that was being taught in the book and in the class is that a spectrum exists in spiritual care from emergencies to simple acts of kindness. We can help in many different ways such as, bringing a meal to someone, cutting grass for someone that is unable, and running an errand. I think that the main thing to remember is that we represent Christ to the world around us. We are the hands and feet of Christ. Whenever we perform an act of compassion, in Christ's name, we act as a Christian and we actually stand in for Christ. We represent Christ to the world around you whenever we help those in need.

The more that I read, the more I was reminded of the strength of your care. I am impressed with the level of concern you have for the wellbeing of others, especially the underprivileged, homeless, and others that live on the fringes of society. Often at times many of these people are out of sight. There are several more examples that I can think of right away within the life of the church. I will not list them all here in order to allow you the space to reflect upon them. However, I will take the time to praise your ministry with the 24 hour self serve food pantry. It was set up by an Eagle Scout through the Daily Bread and was designed to be stocked by the Daily Bread. However, since it gets used daily, they have not been able to stock it well enough to meet the need that exists in our community. Therefore, we provide most of the food for it. Several people take a *Christian initiative* and donate food for the pantry on a regular basis. With just one mention of the need for more food for the food pantry, several people have contributed boxes and cases of shelf stable food. Your efforts to help have been absolutely amazing!

Thank you,

George