



**WISCONSIN
CONFERENCE**
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Sowing Seeds of Mercy: Hope for the Homeless

By Rev. Jacoba Koppert

On July 22, 2017, Clark County celebrated the opening of the “House of Mercy” in Loyal, which began to receive guests in need of the stability of a home in November 2016. The House of Mercy is part of the Beyond Shelter Program. The mission is to provide dignity and stability of a permanent home, as well as supportive services to homeless individuals. While under the auspices of Catholic Charities, the Board of Directors wants the ministry to be ecumenical. Guided by Fr. Steve Brice, a group of clergy and laity began to create an ecumenical worship service and fundraising event. Pastors Jacoba Koppert, UCC, Neillsville, and Asafa Rajaofera, Immanuel UCC, Greenwood, and First Congregational UCC, Owen, were among those who planned the service.



Rev. Rob MacDougall, Rev. Jacoba Koppert,
Rev. Asafa Rajaofera and Rev. Doris Ruben



The service took place in a decorated machine shed on a dairy farm with Amish buggies riding by on July 22. The Catholic, ELCA and United Methodist Bishops, along with Rev. Rob MacDougall, Associate Conference Minister, Wisconsin Conference UCC, participated in the service, as did

Rev. Doris Ruben, Peace UCC Dorchester and Ebenezer UCC, Stratford; Rev. Asafa Rajaofera; Rev. Koppert; and clergy of other denominations. Music was led by the Denk and Beaver families. Together at the event, "Sowing Seeds of Mercy: Hope for the Homeless" we raised \$25,000 for the House of Mercy.

Following our celebration service, a pulled pork lunch was served with all the side dishes again provided by local churches and businesses. Neillsville UCC Member, Bonnie Weyer, invited churches who were and were not participating in other ways to donate the side dishes, so the event became even more inclusive.

Churches and clergy in Clark County are feeling very positive about our first countywide partnership effort to make a difference in our area. Only the Spirit knows where we will go from here!