

# Sharing the Good News

from the pen of the Mission Interpreter



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## Laundry of Love

When some **Women of the ELCA (WELCA)** groups are asked to pitch in, they bubble with enthusiasm. That's what happened when Teresa Nygaard, mission coordinator for **Church on the Street**, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, asked women to contribute laundry pods and quarters to one of the church's newest ministries. Teresa travels throughout South Dakota to speak to congregations and women's groups about the various ministries of **Church on the Street**, an ELCA synodically authorized worshiping community with people without homes.

Rebel Hurd, mission developer with the South Dakota Synod of ELCA, founded **Church on the Street** in 2015. She is currently attending seminary and is a candidate for ordination. She says, "Some people might say, 'We are a church for people who don't quite fit in.' But we like to say, 'We are the church where you fit perfectly.'" The community worships outdoors from April to November and indoors from December to April, depending on weather. Between 70 and 140 people attend worship services; a hot meal follows.

Lately Teresa has been traveling and talking about the church's most recent ministry, Laundry of Love, a twice-a-month opportunity for people without homes to wash their clothes at no expense. "When I start talking to **WELCA** groups about this Laundry of Love and say we can use laundry pods and rolls of quarters, and maybe some cookies, they say, "Of course we can do that!" The Crossroads Conference of **WELCA** recently donated 33 containers of laundry pods and \$800 in quarters. **WELCA** in Dimrock, South Dakota were some of the first to deliver both laundry pods and quarters last summer. They also pack lunches for **Church on the Street** worshippers and construct plastic mats for them to sit on.

Rebel says church volunteers often walk the 1.2 mile radius around **Church on the Street's** office space—gifted by First Lutheran Church in downtown Sioux Falls—to talk to people living on the street. Two questions are asked consistently: What are your prayer requests? and What are your needs? We listen very carefully to what they have to say, and that's how we discovered that those living on the street needed a place to do their laundry, especially teens who were embarrassed to go to school with dirty clothes. "At first we just handed them pods and quarters," Teresa says, "But now we sit with them and talk and even help fold their clothes. This is a ministry with people, not just for people."

Harriet Monson, Laundry of Love's coordinator in Sioux Falls, organizes and advertises the clothes-washing ministry that served twelve families on its first night last May. Most of the machines were kept busy for two hours. She, Rebel and Teresa are all grateful (as are the **Church on the Street** people as well as others) for the **WELCA** groups in South Dakota who make this ministry possible.

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