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Area Church Congregations Work Together To Thrive

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B

among their neighbors. The Mutual Ministry Committee is a group of people drawn together in support of both pastors. There are representatives from all four churches and they meet once a month.

Goals are set for three months at a time. At the end of that time goals are reviewed and reset. Pastor Greene shared three of the goals for GPR and Living Grace Lutheran.

1. Expand peoples understanding

of different committees is one goal. GPR Parish has changed from a family to a program style of organization. Instead of having deacons and trustees as decision making bodies, they now have committee style leadership. 2. Expand and develop women's ministries. This does not mean eliminating WELCA or circles. It means developing some short term women's gatherings, to meet other needs. 3. Expand the understanding and work in lay ministry. There is a lot of talent for leadership and

speaking in the church body. Lay ministry is a way to touch others in a spiritual way. "We want to find any way to let our people know that they are valued members of our congregations. Finding that path makes everyone a winner," commented Pastor Greene. The four church congregations are beginning the new year and voting on continuation of the coalition among them. As Pastor Greene explains, "we are still in the dating and exploring phase of our coalition relationship. We aren't ready to meet the parents yet. We aren't rushing anything."

Pastor Greene describes the officers for the coming year of the Parish as having great energy, great respect and knowing the importance of prayer. "We have a great group of people in leadership who like to laugh and are very spiritual," said Pastor Greene. "Lifting each other up through meditation, prayer, scripture reading and service is so important. When we are connected with God, the life changes become easier," continued Greene. "It is not about having the right answers but about the relationships we build through this process," said Pastor Greene. "We continue



The youth choir at Gran-Park-Rollag Lutheran Parish prepares to share their musical talent with the congregation.



The youth of Gran-Park-Rollag Parish and Living Grace Lutheran Churches are preparing a Valentine dinner. The event was a fundraiser to off-set expenses involved in going to the National Youth Gathering in Houston.

to pray without ceasing". "We are still living into all the possibilities that this collaboration can bring to GPR and Living Grace congregations," stated Pastor Deutscher. "In just the last year, we've seen some exciting things start to emerge such as youth ministry, mutual women's ministry and lay leaders stepping in to help lead

worship. "What's exciting is that each congregation brings its own strengths to the partnership and because of that, the collaboration is about vitality and being in mission and ministry together. Not to survive, but to continue thriving and growing together as we live out our mission to share God's love and grace with the community,"

concluded Pastor Deutscher. There are still changes ahead for Gran-Park-Rollag Lutheran Parish and Living Grace Lutheran Church. The congregations are committed to the ongoing collaborative process. They are also committed to the spiritual health and well being of the church bodies and the surrounding community.

370 Households Received Services in 2017...

Food Pantry Helps Insure A Healthy Community

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Program is to help stop hunger in children over the weekends when school meals are not available. Packs of food are discreetly tucked into the student's backpack each Friday. The packs contain child-friendly, non-perishable and easy to prepare meals and snacks. Besides reducing hunger, the program improves students' readiness to learn and participate when they return to school on Monday. Parents simply have to sign a consent form for their child to be enrolled the following month.

The Backpack program was created under the direction of Feeding American and the Great Plains Food Bank "We are very proud to have the Backpack program here in Barnesville," said Lexi Hought, a member of the Food Pantry's board of directors. "It has been one of the food pantry's goals since joining the Great Plains Food Bank in 2013."

If you would like to help feed a child through sponsorship, the cost for one year is \$160. But any and all donations to help support this vital program are welcome. The Barnesville Lion's Club and Barnesville Thursday Night Lions are each sponsoring six children for the 2018-19 school year. Also recently added is the plant-a-row campaign. Free seeds



Area Food Pantry volunteer coordinators Mary Anderson and Darlys Borgard.

are given to encourage people to grow vegetables. This along with produce donations allow clients to enjoy healthy food choices like apples, corn, squash, tomatoes and much more. Personal hygiene items are also welcome. School groups have held drives to collect items such as shampoo, toothpaste and toothbrushes These are not

items the pantry purchases so the donations are appreciated and the clients are happy to have them. The process for clients is fairly simple. Food Pantry staff take their name, address, the number of people in their household. They can have up to 12 visits in a 12-month period. Some clients have seasonal jobs, so they may need to come in multiple times in the winter months, but not in the

summer. The Food Pantry, which is open Mondays from 5 to 7 p.m., is staffed primarily by local churches and organizations. Exceptions to the Monday openings are Memorial Day and Labor Day, and the following holidays should they land on a Monday: Independence Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.

The pantry will also close without notice if school is closed or dismissed early and/or the interstate is closed because of bad

weather. For information on current Food Pantry needs, go to facebook.com/BarnesvilleAreaFoodPantry



Volunteers at the Area Food Pantry continually stock the shelves.

