



LAUNDRY LOVE

OUR MISSION AT ST. PETER'S, BLAIRSVILLE



What is Laundry Love?

- ▶ Founded in 2003 on the west coast to serve the homeless by asking a simple question "T-Bone, how can we come alongside your life in a way that would matter?" His response was honest and practical. "If I had clean clothes I think people would treat me like a human being."
- ▶ Now a nationwide non-profit organization (laundrylove.org) that provides advice, start up and ongoing support with over 350 registered locations



HEARING DAY
MAY 23, 2019

Laundry Love Stated Mission

- ▶ “The Laundry Love initiative consists of regular opportunities to come alongside people who are struggling financially by assisting them with their laundry. Laundry Love partners with local laundromats in cleaning clothes and linens of low-income or no-income families and individuals. We see the laundromat as a place where strangers become friends, people are known by name, hope is hustled, and the worth of every human being is acknowledged and celebrated.” [www.laundrylove.org]



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MAY 23, 2019

Who do we serve?

- ▶ Our neighbors in Blairsville, PA
 - ▶ Temporarily homeless families
 - ▶ Working poor
 - ▶ Families on public assistance
 - ▶ Public Assistance programs DO NOT cover laundry supplies or the cost of doing laundry
 - ▶ Varies from 3 to 12 families in our village of ~3500

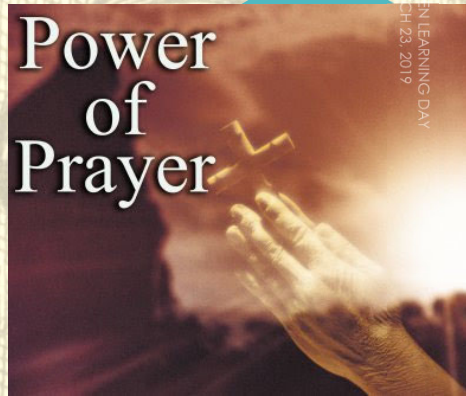


LEARNING DAY
MAY 23, 2019

How did we discern this mission?

- ▶ Desire for Hands-On Outreach in our community
- ▶ Something that was feasible for a tiny congregation
- ▶ Something that could be fully or partially sustainable on a miniscule budget
- ▶ Something unique and needed
- ▶ LOTS OF PRAYER!
- ▶ Take a vacation?

Power
of
Prayer



How Does it Work?



- ▶ Host monthly/weekly/bi-weekly
- ▶ Bring quarters/laundry supplies
- ▶ Make yourself easily identifiable at the laundromat
- ▶ Prepare to be uncomfortable!
- ▶ Open your heart and witness to the stories as your neighbors do their laundry – let it unfold over time
- ▶ Bring Sunday school materials/books for the kids
- ▶ Let the Holy Spirit move you!



How to Get Started - Anyone Can!

- ▶ Requires only 2-3 hours per month for 1-2 volunteers; more in larger communities
- ▶ Funding?
 - ▶ Redirect some of your existing outreach budget
 - ▶ Diocesan Mission Grants are available up to \$5K annually
 - ▶ Set up collection boxes in the community (other churches, cooperating stores, etc.)

SUPPORT OUR LAUNDRY ASSISTANCE MISSION WITH YOUR QUARTERS



Blairsville Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Making a 'change' with *your* change

Sponsored by St. Peter's Episcopal Church

We provide the quarters, the supplies and fellowship for anyone who asks

Questions? Call Kathy @ 603 674-6329

EARLY LEARNING DAY
MARCH 23, 2019

Recommendations for Start Up

- ▶ Download the guide from laundrylove.org
- ▶ Contact and get concurrence with your local laundromat(s)
- ▶ Choose regular date and time
- ▶ Sign up volunteers
- ▶ Get the word out (local newspaper, your church website, local social services agencies, food pantries, police/fire, library, stores, schools, etc.)
- ▶ Share your contact information

St. Peter's begins laundry ministry

By MARYANN GOGNIAT EIDEMILLER

People in the Blairsville area community who are having a tough time making ends meet can get help with their laundry expenses beginning March 12, thanks to a new ministry at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Blairsville.

They can come to the E&F Norge Laundry at 336 Walnut St. from noon to 2:30 p.m. every second Sunday, where they will not only get free detergent, dryer sheets and quarters for the machines, but they will also be offered friendship and conversations with volunteers in the church's ministry.

"We want to sit with people and just be with them, and maybe find ways that we can help them," said church secretary Kathy Baird, whose husband, the Rev. Joseph P. Baird, is one of the church's pastors. The Laundry Love program says that spontaneous things can happen.

Laundry Love is a national project that started 12 years ago in Ventura, California. According to the project's website (laundrylove.org), partnerships all over the country have asked about 1 million loads

of laundry for 750,000 people.

The Bairds learned about Laundry Love last fall when they were vacationing in Hawaii.

"We went to a beautiful little Episcopal church about the same size as St. Peter's and they had a notice in their bulletin about Laundry Love," she said. "We asked about it, and when they told us, we wanted to look into it more. We were really looking for something for the small community of Blairsville. Our parish is small, and this looked like something sustainable that we could do."

Laundry Love had its beginning when the founders encountered a homeless man named Eric, nicknamed T-Bone. When they asked what they could do to "walk alongside your life in a way that would matter," he told them that if he had clean clothes, "People would treat me like a human being."

His desire to experience worth and welcome set the wheels in motion for a simple ministry that has grown across the United States. Laundry Love estimates that there are about 35,000 coin operated laundries, and they are looking for more partnerships to spread

the ministries.

E&F Norge Laundry is not financially supporting the project, but is making their facility available.

The Rev. Arthur C. Dilg, vicar and senior pastor of St. Peter's, agreed that there was a need in Blairsville when Kathy Baird approached him about the idea.

"There are people in the area who could use some help," Kathy Baird said. "Nowadays, it costs about \$6 to \$8 for washing and drying one load, and they can use a break from that."

Laundry Love is also an opportunity to meet people where they are and to hear their stories.

"It's the kind of place where things could happen," Kathy Baird said. "It's been done mostly in larger towns where they really have a visible homeless population, but good things can happen anywhere."

The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh gave the parish initial funding to get the project started, and they also sent information to other churches in the diocese that might be interested in starting their own Laundry Love ministry. The Bairds and volunteers

put up posters around Blairsville including in the laundromat, and contacted a number of social services agencies in Indiana County.

"There aren't guidelines for qualifying and we aren't asking questions about the need," Kathy Baird said. "We're trusting that people won't come just to rip us off."

Laundry Love's website lists the hopes of their ministry to bring people together, to selflessly serve through hospitality and caring, to practice love and to encourage responsibility and dignity. Its mission is to not be a service project "to do" for people, but rather an expression of living with others.

"People need a place where we can just sit and talk with them and be witness to them, and see what stories they have," Kathy Baird said. "A laundromat is a public place where anyone can go, and people will be welcome to stop in to see how things are going. Anybody who feels like coming is certainly welcome."

For information, contact Kathy Baird at 603-674-6329 or kathy950@gmail.com.

Maryann Gogniat Eidemiller is a contributing writer

What Have Been Our Challenges?

- ▶ Challenges: Our laundry love patrons are often transient, moving for a better job or housing and most have no cars
- ▶ Solutions - be flexible and creative
 - ▶ Other churches in our diocese have chosen to support those who moved to their town
 - ▶ Offering extra sessions when need arises
 - ▶ Using a different laundromat if closer to them
 - ▶ Offering transportation during inclement weather

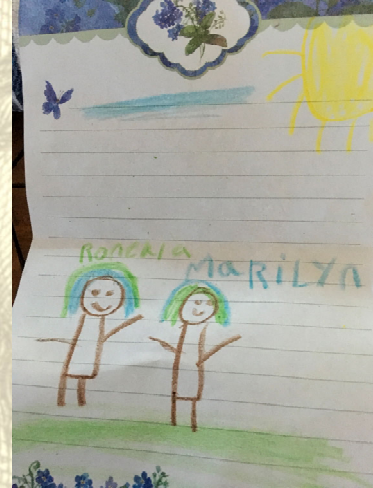


FAQs?

- ▶ Do you actually do their laundry for them?
 - ▶ No – the only assistance we offer is to put the quarters in the machines as we chat
- ▶ Do they need to prove a need?
 - ▶ No – there is no paperwork to fill out and we simply state that we have limited funds and supplies and hope that they do not take advantage
- ▶ Is privacy an issue?
 - ▶ We ask them for contact information to stay in touch (e.g., cell phone, email) but use first names only

Joyful Stories from St. Peter's

- ▶ People show up at the laundromat
 - ▶ to donate supplies and cash
 - ▶ to share their special skill
- ▶ Our laundry love patrons have
 - ▶ Shared what little they have with us and others
 - ▶ Requested and partaken in Holy Communion offered at the laundromat
 - ▶ Requested information about Baptism
 - ▶ **Never** taken advantage of our offering or our time
 - ▶ Been a true blessing to us in so many ways we never imagined



Insights from St. Paul's, Nantucket

- ▶ Even wealthy communities have a need (average 15-20 families/month)
- ▶ Ecumenical approach (Inter-Faith Council support)
- ▶ Tailored to their community of 17-60,000 (seasonally)
 - ▶ Laundry Cards instead of quarters
 - ▶ Multi-lingual patrons (English, Hispanic, Portuguese)
 - ▶ Fair & equitable access is a challenge
 - ▶ Summer laundry cards sent to 'regulars'

FREE LAUNDRY!



WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 9
2:30 – 4:30 PM
Holdgates Island Laundromat
4 Vesper Lane

NEED HELP DOING YOUR LAUNDRY?

For your laundry needs,
St. Paul's Church will provide FREE

*Use of Laundry Card for up to 4 loads
*Detergent
*Dryer Sheets

Bring your laundry!



Joyful Stories from St. Paul's

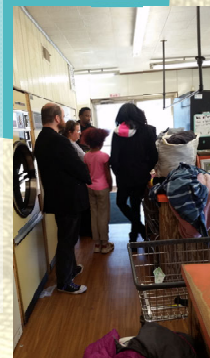
- ▶ Neighbors they never knew!
 - ▶ New Life Ministries (mostly Jamaican) already a St. Pauls' tenant
 - ▶ Some of their parishioners were in need and showed up at the laundromat
 - ▶ Which led to.....
 - ▶ hymn singing at the laundromat
 - ▶joint pot luck dinners.....
 - ▶and joint services
 - ▶and new friends



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Love, Teach, Heal

- ▶ After two years a level of trust, friendship and love has evolved
 - ▶ there are always hugs, smiles, and text messages back and forth
 - ▶ It's hard to tell who has benefited the most (us or our patrons!)
 - ▶ We have seen them move into better circumstances and leave us (bittersweet)
 - ▶ We have witnessed some healing in their families and growth in faith



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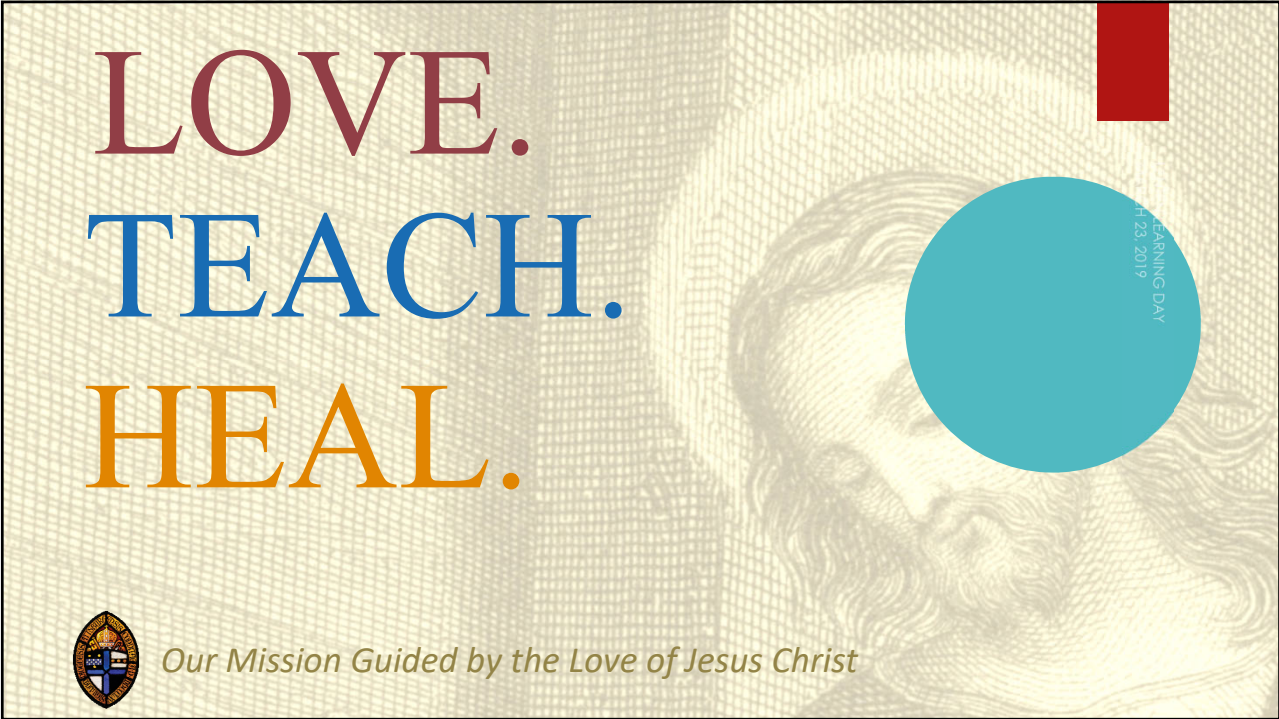
Final Thoughts

- ▶ The walls of St. Peter's have simply expanded into our community - rethink the concept of 'church'
- ▶ The Blairsville Ministerium has embraced our mission and helps fund it – ecumenism breaks down barriers
- ▶ We may start offering a meal before laundry starts
- ▶ Lay ministry with funded clergy support possible
- ▶ Don't worry....it is God's work and it will follow God's path, not yours!






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LOVE.
TEACH.
HEAL.

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Our Mission Guided by the Love of Jesus Christ