

New Things Happening in the New Hampshire Conference

A series sponsored by A New Thing Task Force sharing great things happening in the Conference

The purpose of this series is to share possibilities and also contacts, as a resource, if you would like to use these ideas in your own particular way.

(Longmeadow Congregational Church, Auburn NH)

While working with Rev. Paul Nickerson's "Reaching New People" program, the Longmeadow Congregational Church, UCC in Auburn embraced a new paradigm of community outreach. Rather than relying on one group to be responsible for Outreach, the entire church sought to look at every activity of the church and ask the question, "how can this be used to intentionally reach out to our community?" Led and encouraged by a Vitality Team, the church has worked hard to engage the community through developing relationships of mutual benefit throughout the town. These growing relationships have included the town elementary school with the Sunday School assembling backpacks of school supplies, the Ladies Circle providing hats and mittens for students in winter and the Deacons Fund paying off school lunch accounts for children in need. In response the school frequently contacts the church to see how they can support the work of the church. Longmeadow's Pastor serves both the Police and Fire Departments who in turn have a friendly rivalry to see who can give more to the church's school supply collection. The Missions Committee engages with local knitting groups and individuals to create hundreds of scarves to distribute freely in Manchester parks which has brought several people into the church community. And the Vitality Team supports the local Parks and Rec departments by offering free popcorn at all of their events. The pastor's weekly Community Office hours plus informal weekday evening Café Church gatherings have brought many people into the church community who had not previously been engaged by more traditional worship. Alone, each activity appears small and is certainly easily accomplished. But combined, the new paradigm of community engagement and intentional relationship building has been transformational to Longmeadow's ministry.

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