

Faith Connection Story – Trinity, Gettysburg

About three years ago members of the Outreach Committee of Trinity United Church of Christ, Gettysburg, were taking a Prayer Walk around the local neighborhood, brainstorming about ways in which the church could respond to the needs of the area surrounding the church. So began Trinity, Gettysburg's ongoing Diaper Drive to provide the very basics for young families that often struggle with the costs of providing diapers. In its first full year Trinity provided over 10,000 diapers to Tender Care Pregnancy Center in Gettysburg for distribution to families with infants and toddlers.

Perhaps it was inevitable that the church discovered that there was not only a need for the basics for infants, but people of all ages. If you go to any of the second hand shops, you can always find shirts and blouses, pants and skirts, t-shirts and work clothes and even shoes but not underwear or socks. The idea of "Undie Sunday" (an idea borrowed from Heidelberg UCC in York) was born and Trinity decided to dedicate a Sunday to receive new underwear and socks to distribute where needed in the community of Gettysburg.

When the original diaper drive began, a couple who were members of Trinity approached their neighbors across the alley, Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity of Gettysburg College, to ask if they were interested in helping with providing diapers and they responded positively. So as the idea of "Undie Sunday" began to take shape, the fraternity was again asked if they would be interested in joining Trinity in a joint effort to collect new underwear and socks. They responded with enthusiasm and "Undie Sunday" was planned for the Sunday after Easter.

It didn't take too much effort to get people intrigued and enthusiastic about responding to an unmet need (and often a need not thought about) in the community. The underwear drawer in the Gathering Area of the church began to fill up several weeks in advance of the event.

On the morning of "Undie Sunday" an underwear drawer was placed on the altar. And as congregants came in, people brought bags full of underwear and socks until the altar was overflowing and items were piled in front of and around the altar.

Thirty five young men from the fraternity joined the people of Trinity for worship that morning – a joyous, lively, and enthusiastic worship service. One of the ensembles from Gettysburg College, Drop the Octave, sang during worship and we enjoyed the fellowship and uniting in a common effort. It was a memorable celebration for the people of Trinity and for the young men of the fraternity as well.

Afterward, soup and sandwiches were shared in fellowship. Of course, the fraternity guys were happy to take all the leftover desserts with them back to the fraternity house.

Rev. George Heberling remembers, *"Perhaps most gratifying was the comment by a number of the young men, 'When are we doing this again?' We do look forward to nurturing and growing this relationship with Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity and exploring how we can continue to work together."*

Trinity received about \$2,500 worth of underwear and socks for distribution in the community – to TenderCare Pregnancy Center, Survivors, the Adams Rescue Mission, The Agape House, and the South Central Community Action Center, as well as the nurses' offices of Gettysburg Area School District and Fairfield School District. Unfortunately, they were not able to fill all the requests for help, which just shows how large the need is. To fulfill it, they look forward to making "Undie Sunday" an annual event.

