

## **FROM THE PASTOR'S HEART...**

It was a joy and a challenge to hear from Madeline Bafus during worship last Sunday. She is the Director of Spokane's Interfaith Hospitality Network. I am pleased that we are beginning the season of Lent with some congregational soul searching about participating in the Interfaith Hospitality Network of Spokane. When we were asked to consider replacing a congregation that could no longer be part of IHN, our Church Council prayerfully decided to take the next two weekly sessions previously served by this church. These dates are April 25-May 1 & July 18-24, If there are enough volunteer servants from APUMC to come forward to do this ministry with homeless families, we will then commit to joining the other eleven congregations in the Interfaith Hospitality Network in providing a week of hospitality in our building four times a year.

This information from the Family Promise (IHN) website explains the program.

**A mother loses her job, a father is kept from working by an injury, a family is forced from their home by fire or natural disaster. Healthcare costs soar, public transportation is underfunded, affordable housing is almost impossible to find. These are the reasons why families now make up 40 percent of the homeless population, and why one out of every four homeless people is a child.**

**In response to this crisis, the Interfaith Hospitality Network brings the faith community together to help families regain their housing, their independence, and their dignity. IHN is a partnership of congregations within a community helping families who are facing homelessness. It offers an opportunity for volunteers of all faiths to reduce homelessness and transform lives.**

**Interfaith Hospitality Network is currently operating in 39 states and the District of Columbia, in large cities, suburbs and rural counties. They mobilize community resources: houses of worship for lodging, congregations for volunteers, social service agencies for assessment and referrals, and existing facilities for day programs. This strategy enables networks to help homeless families achieve sustainable independence at a third of the cost of traditional shelters.**

**Nationally, 80 percent of the families that INHs serve go on to long-term housing. In 2008, Family Promise (IHN) affiliates served more than 45,000 children and adults and involved more than 125,000 volunteers in 5,000 congregations.**

**Currently, 152 affiliates are in operation, and dozens more are in development.**

So, what is expected of us? We need people to serve in the following ways:

2 Overnight Hosts each night

Provide a hot evening meal, continental breakfast, and fixings for lunch & servers

Provide a van driver to and from the IHN office to the church at 6:00 AM & 5:00 PM each day. (van provided) .

Members of a Ministry Team to oversee all aspects of the program

Persons can do multiple tasks, such as overnight host and AM van driver or meal provider and server, or do only one task. We are currently negotiating with some other congregations to participate with us, but APUMC must be committed enough to do it all, if necessary.

Please pray about your personal involvement in this ministry opportunity. The need is great. The basement of our building is perfect for IHN and 100 % available for overnight guests. The only concern is, is APUMC willing to put themselves out to help Jesus bring some families in? Please let me know ASAP! if you will serve on the IHN Ministry Team and help us get this

need meeting ministry up and going.

See you in Church, APUMC!

Pastor Carl