



# WELCOME MINISTRY of EL CAJON

Fall 2019 Newsletter

Volume 4 | Issue 2



Welcome Ministry volunteer Mike Park arriving with a delivery of fresh produce for our Tuesday morning Joy Force Refugee Ministry food pantry.

## Announcements...

- Join us for **Welcome Church—Church without Walls** in Wells Park, Sunday, November 3rd, at 3:00 PM. We'll begin with worship and conclude with a free community picnic. Welcome Church will also meet December 1st and January 5th, 2020.
- Welcome Ministry's **Joy Force** free food pantry occurs every month on the first and third Tuesday mornings following our bilingual Mass in English and Arabic at 8:45 AM.
- We'd like to replace our faithful, but rapidly aging, pick-up truck in order to grow our food pantry. We are accepting tax-deductible donations for the purchase of a late model vehicle that will accommodate larger loads (see page 3).
- Visit our new website: [welcomeministryec.org](http://welcomeministryec.org).

## In This Issue...

**Page 2:** Father Dave regarding homelessness and helplessness: "...my prayer is that I will lend an ear to fresh ideas and viewpoints of others ... we will, to the best of our ability, listen and appreciate others who serve the unhoused, immigrants and disenfranchised among us."

**Page 3:** How you can join us in building an inclusive ministry of accompaniment and outreach.

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## HOMELESSNESS AND HELPLESSNESS

### the Rev. Dr. David L. Madsen | Mission Developer

I recently watched a show on PBS describing the philanthropic actions of successful businessman Ted Turner in his golden years. Ted had a bumper sticker on his car that read: “Save everything”. He explained that this worldview included environment, endangered species, world peace, and the good and welfare of all people. He donated \$1-billion to the United Nations at a time when the UN was struggling financially. I really respect that. We may not all agree with Ted’s choices and methods, but his commitment to bringing change for the good and welfare of so many meaningful causes gives me pause.

I do not anticipate an eagle ever landing on my porch with \$1 billion in its talons, but a billion dollars would go a long way to eradicate homelessness in East San Diego County. However, who would administer the funds, and what is the best methodology? I do not think it is my right to speak for others who may view things differently than myself and the organization I represent. There are many of us involved in accepting, welcoming, and assisting those trying to survive on the margins of our communities. As a pastor, my prayer is that I will lend an ear to fresh ideas and viewpoints of others.

*Concerning homelessness:* I make this pledge for **Welcome Ministry**. We will, to the best of our ability, listen and appreciate others who serve immigrants, the unhoused, and disenfranchised among us. We will assist those who collect data, and those who counsel and serve hurting people behind closed doors. We will support those who venture into the woods, parks, riverfront areas, canals, and streets of East County. We will continue to work with civil authorities and agencies, social workers, local and regional homeless organizations, churches and non-profits.

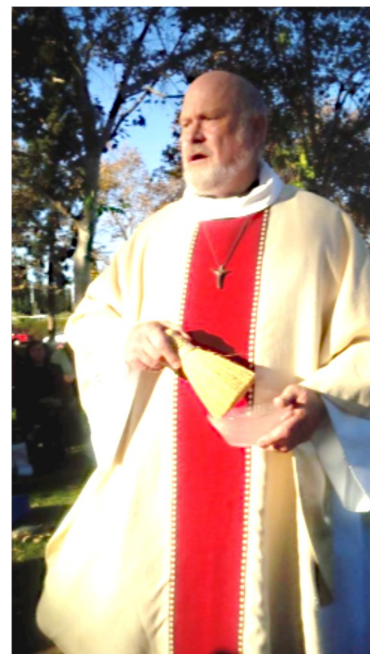
***“I make this  
pledge for  
Welcome  
Ministry...”***

We ourselves also plan to be in the trenches on behalf of those hurting, hungry, mentally ill and living on the outskirts of acceptable norms. We will listen and respect confidentiality when told things in trust. We will speak up for those unable to speak for themselves and be an advocate if a community chooses to turn a deaf ear.

This brings me to two “elephants in the room:” *homelessness and helplessness*. I appreciate all dedicated leaders in East County who do their best to confront the complications for those who live unhoused and/or are unwelcomed in East County. In my six years as a pastor in San Diego County I have met many colleagues committed to eradicating homelessness and welcoming strangers to our communities. There are too many of you to name, because I’m afraid I would leave out some folks if I attempted to do so.

*Concerning helplessness:* I experienced helplessness on a recent Sunday afternoon when an unhoused person wandered onto a local church campus. The person had just recently been beat-up and was seeking urgent help. We have contacts and phone numbers that we look to for such emergencies. However, even if there might be help available somewhere, there first are often waiting periods to confront and a variety of

*(Continued on page 3)*



**Father Dave Madsen**





## BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

Jeremy Kaercher | Program Manager

*Welcome Ministry* is building partnerships with congregations and faith leaders across denominational traditions. Here is how you can join us to build an inclusive ministry of accompaniment and outreach:

**Volunteer—one time or as often as you are able.**

We have service opportunities with our *Joy Force Refugee Ministry* and with *Welcome Church—Church without Walls*. Examples of the talents we seek that will lift the work of our ministry include individuals with the:

- Experienced talents of a grant writer;
- Helpful hands to pack our twice-monthly *Joy Force Refugee Ministry* food pantry grocery bags;
- Strong arms and legs to pick-up produce from the San Diego Food Bank for our food pantry;
- Generous heart to help with our *Welcome Church—Church without Walls* worship; and
- Compassionate souls willing to share their time in

direct services to our community members through transportation assistance, mentoring, our *Table Talk* English conversation group, and personal outreach to refugees and the homeless.

**Donate—we're growing, and the needs of our community members are growing too.** Each dollar directly supports outreach ministry in the El Cajon Valley. We especially would like to replace our aging, undersized pick-up truck used to transport produce to our food pantry. It is now 20+ years old, and it limits the number of pantry clients we serve each month. When fully loaded it is low and slow—especially uphill on freeways!

## How you can help Welcome Ministry

In its place we will purchase a gently used, full-size vehicle with many serviceable miles remaining. A pick-up truck purchased with your assistance will allow us to serve many more food pantry clients each month.

If something you read here causes you to think to yourself, “I wonder if that is me?”, please contact us and let us get to know you, and you us.

(Continued from page 2)

## HOMELESSNESS AND HELPLESSNESS | *continued*

hoops to jump through. Too often no services are available in that moment, if ever at all. I've found myself confronting this situation too many times. The situation does not appear to be any better than six years ago when I made Southern California my home. I know many faith leaders reading this know exactly what I am talking about. If there is to be help for the vulnerable it often only occurs through efforts made by local worship communities. We use our limited funds to supply lodging for a night or two as we also then try our best to find needed help. Communities of faith, especially smaller ones, usually do not have resources or staff that can help all that much. We do our best with what we have. As we do, we expose a *frustrating helplessness*. However, the spiritual cohesive force of loving our neighbors as ourselves creates a space for the “healing Balm of Gilead”. I am thankful for every agency and organization that works toward the eradication of homelessness, but I really appreciate faith leaders of worshipping communities who have opened their doors and hearts to the plight of the disenfranchised, the poor, homeless and immigrants for so many years, often long before some of today's service agencies even existed. I want to work with you.

I am reminded of a wonderful proverb that commends the beauty of joining hands together in common work:

Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves.  
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. (*Ecclesiastes 4:12, NIV*)

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**Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

## **WELCOME CHURCH IS ON THE MOVE**

Until early this summer Welcome Church had been meeting in El Cajon's Wells Park. Over time, however, fewer and fewer persons experiencing homelessness were present in the park to join us for worship because of targeted police enforcement efforts focused on this vulnerable population. During the summer Welcome Church met near the public library in Lakeside where homeless persons often gather. However, we found that offering a worship service and community picnic there to also be a challenge. On Sunday, November 3rd, we will return to Wells Park (1153 East Madison Ave.; El Cajon 92021) to resume a monthly schedule of worship and fellowship. Join us at 3:00 to experience Christ's meal together as we build His church for those who find the front doors of church buildings to be a barrier to their attending.

## **WELCOME MINISTRY HONORED AT ELCA/PC-USA NATIONAL MEETING**

Welcome Ministry was recently recognized at the recent national conference of the Presbyterian Church USA and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's (ELCA) fall Kaleidoscope Stewardship conference. The three-day meeting was held in San Diego September 30th-October 3rd. Over 300 clergy and lay leaders gathered in worship and trainings related to congregational stewardship. A special collection was raised during the event with the proceeds shared equally by Welcome Ministry representing the ELCA and Presbyterian Urban Ministry which has offices in the Grant Hill neighborhood of San Diego. We thank the conference sponsors and attendees for generously supporting our ministry outreach.

