

## COVID19 Shuts Down Churches – NOT!

*This story was shared with us in 2020 early on in the pandemic.*

The church is not the building, but the people who inhabit God's praises.

During this time of separation and isolation brought on by the COVID19 Pandemic, Redeemer Metropolitan Community Church of Flint, like so many other churches, was feeling cut off from each other. In response to the closure of churches in Michigan, we immediately began to worship together online every Sunday evening. Then, we added an online Bible study twice a week. It was encouraging to worship and study together, even though we could not gather together. Board members divided up the congregation, and began checking in with members on a weekly basis, as another way to stay connected. Members stepped up and provided transportation and meals for a member combating cancer. Our online prayer chain is active and vibrant. These activities continue to bring love and support to our members.

As we grew in our faith, it was clear that we needed more than in-reach. We needed outreach. We needed an opportunity to look beyond our cyberspace walls, and to find an opportunity to share God's love with others. So, we developed a plan to reach a vulnerable, cut-off segment of our society – long term care facility residents.



Our plan was simple: members would hand write or draw cards or notes of encouragement. Our target facility has 202 beds, so 11 members completed 202 cards and notes, then, collected and delivered them to the facility. We included a cover letter, thanking the staff for their dedicated, heroic care for their residents.

In Matthew's Gospel, chapter 25 speaks of Jesus being hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, and in prison. By caring for these needs, experienced by the least of Christ's brothers and sisters, we minister to Jesus.

Humbly, we offered these hand written expressions of God's love to the residents of a long term care facility. We are not sure who was blessed more, the writers or the recipients. We might be restricted during this pandemic, but God's love knows no

bounds. Paul encourages us in Philippians chapter 2 to consider others as more important than ourselves; everyone should look out not only for their own interests, but also for the interests of others. We don't know when we will be able to safely gather together again as a church, but we have learned that we are not limited or confined to a building.

Together, we are The Church; the heart, hands, and feet of Jesus.

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