

Word & Way

SERVING MISSOURI BAPTISTS FOR OVER A CENTURY



www.wordandway.org

Rolla church reconnects to bring Christ's grace to the community

By Vicki Brown, *Associate Editor*

Scores of people lined the sidewalks around the church before the Ministry Center doors opened at 8:30 a.m. on a crisp Saturday last fall. By 11:30 that morning, more than 600 people had taken advantage of a free yard sale at First Baptist Church, Rolla.

A congregation once primarily recognized as a “university” church, attracting professors and students, is more often seen today as “the church committed to its community.”

That turn in reputation reflects a keener awareness among First Baptist members that personal and corporate faith must express itself through community ministry.

Relief agency World Vision and Outreach Inc., a church communication resource firm, partnered to develop the missional-lifestyle campaign in 2007 and continue to promote “National Faith in Action Sunday” each fall.

Although groups at First Baptist had completed studies in the past, the Faith in Action material attracted attention because it emphasizes service, Lori Ausmus explained.

When the Ausmuses brought the material to him, pastor Bob Johnston jumped at the opportunity to see what difference the service component might make.



Word & Way

SERVING MISSOURI BAPTISTS FOR OVER A CENTURY



www.wordandway.org

Rolla church reconnects to bring Christ's grace to the community

By Vicki Brown, *Associate Editor*

Scores of people lined the sidewalks around the church before the Ministry Center doors opened at 8:30 a.m. on a crisp Saturday last fall. By 11:30 that morning, more than 600 people had taken advantage of a free yard sale at First Baptist Church, Rolla.

A congregation once primarily recognized as a “university” church, attracting professors and students, is more often seen today as “the church committed to its community.”

That turn in reputation reflects a keener awareness among First Baptist members that personal and corporate faith must express itself through community ministry.

Relief agency World Vision and Outreach Inc., a church communication resource firm, partnered to develop the missional-lifestyle campaign in 2007 and continue to promote “National Faith in Action Sunday” each fall.

Although groups at First Baptist had completed studies in the past, the Faith in Action material attracted attention because it emphasizes service, Lori Ausmus explained.

When the Ausmuses brought the material to him, pastor Bob Johnston jumped at the opportunity to see what difference the service component might make.



The Ausmuses formed a team to brainstorm and coordinate possible service projects as small groups studied the four-week material and Johnston preached a sermon series on active faith.

“We started with simple things,” Johnston said, including cutting brush and doing other chores around an outdoor classroom at a nearby elementary school and assisting with U.S. Department of Agriculture food distribution.

The congregation also offered a pancake-and-sausage meal throughout the Saturday of their 2009 fall ministry blitz. Church members sat and visited with community folks who came, while others assisted with the yard sale. They staffed a prayer tent to talk and pray with those who stopped in.

“It was a real eye-opener to the needs of our community,” Ausmus said.

Reconnection for opportunities to share Christ was what the pastor sought. While some members just see the church working in the community, others are seeing that work open other opportunities.

“People began to look and say, ‘Wow, this is really making connections,’” he added. “Now they look and recognize...this is making an impact for Christ.

“It’s not that we haven’t done things in the past. We have, and some of the groups in the church have,” Johnston said. “But this has made a greater awareness.”

Invest in your faith with a *Word&Way* subscription. 1 year - 26 issues

Word&Way keeps you informed! Since 1896 we have been providing local and international news, features and faith resources to all Missouri Baptists.

Start a new subscription or give a gift subscription for just \$17.50.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Daytime Phone: _____

E-mail: _____



3236 Emerald Lane, Suite 400
Jefferson City, MO 65109-3700
573.635.5939 or subscribe@wordandway.org

- I want to subscribe for a friend.
Contact me by ___ phone ___ e-mail for their name and address.
- I'd like information about advertising options to reach your audience.

Please return the response form and place it in the offering plate.

The Ausmuses formed a team to brainstorm and coordinate possible service projects as small groups studied the four-week material and Johnston preached a sermon series on active faith.

“We started with simple things,” Johnston said, including cutting brush and doing other chores around an outdoor classroom at a nearby elementary school and assisting with U.S. Department of Agriculture food distribution.

The congregation also offered a pancake-and-sausage meal throughout the Saturday of their 2009 fall ministry blitz. Church members sat and visited with community folks who came, while others assisted with the yard sale. They staffed a prayer tent to talk and pray with those who stopped in.

“It was a real eye-opener to the needs of our community,” Ausmus said.

Reconnection for opportunities to share Christ was what the pastor sought. While some members just see the church working in the community, others are seeing that work open other opportunities.

“People began to look and say, ‘Wow, this is really making connections,’” he added. “Now they look and recognize...this is making an impact for Christ.

“It’s not that we haven’t done things in the past. We have, and some of the groups in the church have,” Johnston said. “But this has made a greater awareness.”

Invest in your faith with a *Word&Way* subscription. 1 year - 26 issues

Word&Way keeps you informed! Since 1896 we have been providing local and international news, features and faith resources to all Missouri Baptists.

Start a new subscription or give a gift subscription for just \$17.50.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Daytime Phone: _____

E-mail: _____



3236 Emerald Lane, Suite 400
Jefferson City, MO 65109-3700
573.635.5939 or subscribe@wordandway.org

- I want to subscribe for a friend.
Contact me by ___ phone ___ e-mail for their name and address.
- I'd like information about advertising options to reach your audience.

Please return the response form and place it in the offering plate.