

Current Thoughts

from Dwight's corner

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This is atypical of my usual meanderings in this “column,” but I think it is worthy.

A fierce storm in mid-July knocked out the power for many residents of the St. Louis area. In the aftermath, I was able to award a One Great Hour of Sharing grant to the New Journey Baptist Church. New Journey is served by Pastor Lynette Austin and is one of our very recent church plants. They are in a poorer neighborhood of St. Louis and included residents without power for days. The One Great Hour of Sharing grant, made possible by your generous offerings, helped them respond to this ministry opportunity. I share with you a few excerpts from Pastor Austin's letter to me.

Life without power doesn't just leave you sitting quietly in the dark; many areas (you don't think of) are affected. It was difficult to find a gas station that wasn't shut down due to the outage, the stores were quickly depleted of ice and “C” batteries, and many phones weren't working. With no street lights and many trees and power lines on the ground, it was a real danger to travel. Combined with temperatures greater than 90 degrees and the high humidity, many were forced to seek a “cooling center” to prevent respiratory and other health issues.



On July 20th we opened the church to the community as a cooling station and a lighthouse. Some came just to recharge their cell phones Others stayed, pallets were made The first day we sheltered approximately 20-25 people providing meals and cold drinks Members went from house to house [seeking those who needed assistance].... Our plan was to provide box meals to as many as possible, but thanks be to God, after receiving the grant ... we were able

to feed more than 150 people a hot meal Friday, and 75 or more on Saturday, as well as buy batteries, ice, and gas for some.

Your funding allowed us to reach out to so many, to make new friends and to truly magnify the Lord. For many it may have been the worst of times, but for us it became one of the best times. Nothing compares to serving the Lord with gladness.

The people expressed much gratitude and it would not have been possible without you. We are so grateful for ABC's contribution. Once again you are there for us; you are always there for us, always helping us to be there for the people. We can never express how grateful we are.

Love and Peace,

Pastor Lynette Austin

I have been able to award One Great Hour of Sharing grants to GRR churches twice this year because of the faithful generosity of American Baptists in supporting an offering designed specifically for compassionate ministries in the midst of crisis. Thank you for that privilege. Well done!!!!



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