

**Focus on Stewardship**  
**Tomas Klaseus, Outreach**  
**Sunday - November 8, 2015**

There are so many Outreach activities that could be a part of this Focus on Stewardship, not the least of which was our tremendously successful Grocery Run yesterday. What an event - we had a record number of participants (nearly 1,275 runners and walkers) in the 5k and countless others in the 1 mile event! The monies raised will put a small dent in hunger in the Rochester community!

I have chosen to share two personal experiences in our Outreach programs that have been particularly moving to me.

Sue and I serve on a Dining Room Ministry team. A few months ago, one of our regular guests (an African-American woman named Rosalee) came to Dining Room Ministry loaded down with several full bags of groceries that she wanted to make sure got to our Food Cupboard. Rosalee told us that she had recently gotten a job and was now capable of supporting her family. The groceries and a card were her way of saying thank you to Third Church for being there when she was unemployed. I would like to read her card. "Thank you. I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. Thank you for feeding me and my family when I was out of work. Rosalee ". Our Dining Room Ministry and Food Cupboard made a real difference in Rosalee and her family's lives!

My other experience happened in 2011 when I traveled to Kenya with four other Third Churchers to visit our brothers and sisters in the Kihumo Presbyterian Church. As many of you know, we provided monies from our Capital Campaign to the Kihumo Church to purchase purebred goats for distribution to the neediest members of their congregation. A severely handicapped woman, named Rosemary, was one of the first recipients of a goat. Rosemary lives with her daughter, granddaughter, and their animals in a home (you or I would probably call it a hovel or, more simply put, a shack but it is home to them) with dirt floors, a corrugated metal roof, and patched-together wood-slatted and metal siding. The goats have provided Rosemary with a livelihood and have transformed her and her family's lives. She has milk for her granddaughter with enough left over to sell on the side, and, during our visit, she sold a buck for the US equivalent of \$150.00. Rosemary was so thankful for what the Kihumo Church and Third Church had done for her and her family that she gave the entire \$150.00 to the church. I can only imagine what a difference \$150.00 would have made in Rosemary's personal life. It is truly a modern day version of the poor widow in the Bible that put her remaining two alms in the offering plate.

You can talk to anyone serving in one of our Outreach programs and you will hear similarly moving experiences, whether that is:

- \*nurturing a young mind through our tutoring programs at Rochester Schools 3, 35, and East High;
- \*providing temporary shelter for homeless families through our RAIHN program;
- \*showing an at-risk youth that there is an alternative to gun violence through our Field of Dreams campout at Frontier Field;

We do make a real difference in people's lives, thanks to many dedicated and caring individuals sharing their time and talent in our Outreach programs and thanks to your generosity in supporting those programs. I would ask you to remember Rosalee and Rosemary when you make your pledge next Sunday. You can and do make a difference! Together, we can and will make a difference! Thank you.