

Do Something!
James 1:17-27
Church in the Wildwood
August 30, 2015 / Ordinary 22 – Vespers

The Epistle of James is one of my favorite parts of the Bible, definitely my favorite epistle. The reason is because it is a call to action. The running theme throughout the letter is that you can say the right things and attend the meetings, but you had better be doing something that puts your faith into action when you are out in the world. It is very direct, even uncomfortably blunt in places, but is extremely clear: To be a faithful follower of Jesus, that faith had better include actions that answers His Call for us to love & serve our neighbors as our gifts allow.

James proceeds systematically in the first part of his epistle. If you hear of a need, and do not do anything about it, while you are able to, then he bluntly says your faith is dead. After this selection, he says the same thing about attitudes towards people. Then he goes through the same thing about seeing needs.

About a month or so ago, I had heard on the radio about a UN report on the state of hunger in the world. The good news is that despite a growing population, the number of hungry or malnourished people has dropped by 200 million people over the last 25 years. On the flip side, roughly 12% of the world population, about 780 million people are still hungry or malnourished.

Not all of them are in underdeveloped countries. Some of them are here in our community. I checked our state's statistics, and I was shocked to find that every town, every town in our state has hungry and undernourished people! Colebrook, has the third lowest statistic, with only Warren and Union having less than us. But like the world numbers, a small number is good, but it's not zero.

That same week, Abrah & I met with Lee from the town hall. I asked her how can our church help the people in our community. She told us: Food. She said that a food pantry in Colebrook would go a long way to helping out our community. What she has had to do, whenever someone was in need of

food, was to send them to Winsted or Torrington. Our neighbors in need have to go out of town? That didn't seem right to me.

Lee also told me about her time in Sheffield. The Congregational Church up there started a food pantry and had streamlined their organization of it. They didn't even need storage. They collected and boxes food one day, then the next the doors are open for a set amount of time for anyone to come pick up a box of food. And that's it. Food in one day, out the next.

The congregation and the organizations of our Meetinghouse have already started collecting nonperishables for a food pantry to serve Colebrook, and I am proud to announce that this week, we will start public collections. There will be food collection bins both in the church's lower parking lot and also in the Colebrook Store. We will be working with Lee, who already helps those in need in our town, to make sure that the food gets to who needs it.

I believe that this is doable. With careful planning and preparation, I believe we can do this, and serve a need in our community. Jesus tells us over and over that it is a believer's responsibility to feed the hungry if they have the means and are able to do so. I think we should seriously examine if we really do have the means and ability that I believe we can organize in this town. Those who are hearers of the word must also be doers of the word, James says. So each of us must reflect upon ourselves and decide, shall I do something?