

Little Free Pantry Dedication held at Concordia FUMC

On Sunday, July 9th, the First United Methodist Church held a dedication for the Little Free Pantry installed in front of their building at 740 W 11th St in Concordia. The dedication was held as part of the church service and was followed by a reception and fellowship time.

The pantry was installed during the organization's annual Change the World event on April 30th. Initially, traffic at the pantry was slow, but over the past couple of months, people have become aware of the pantry and have started using it. According to Pastor Melanie Adams, there is a steady stream of traffic at the pantry on a daily basis. "First United Methodist Church is always seeking ways to share God's love with our neighbors. The Little Free Pantry is a gift of love to our community," said Adams.

Support for the pantry has grown organically within the church and many members are checking the pantry regularly to add items or to remove items that do not meet the pantry's guidelines. In particular, expired items should not be left in the pantry. Lists of suggested and prohibited items are available in the pantry. The pantry has been entirely stocked with donated items. The church has collected some monetary donations that will be used to supplement the pantry stock as needed.

As part of the dedication, Tonya Merrill from the Cloud County Resource Center presented information about living in poverty and with food insecurity in Cloud County. The group participated in a simulation called the Cost of Poverty Experience (COPE). "I often see people under sad circumstances, struggling to pull themselves together and get enough to scrap by. One person equated this to being like drowning in a few inches of water. You can see the surface, briefly you can even touch but what you can't do is break through to get even one solid breathe in your lungs," Merrill said.

"Our Missions Team worked with the CCRC to plan the pantry installation and we are seeing our congregation and members of the community supporting the vision. We are excited that we found a way to help our neighbors and are looking for more opportunities to become more involved with our community," said Nancy Wentz, chair of the FUMC Missions Team.

For more information about the Little Free Panty movement go to www.littlefreepantry.org. For more information about the COPE summation, go to www.playspent.org. To volunteer locally at the Cloud County Resource Center, call 243-1065 or e-mail ccrc@nckcn.com. All are welcome to leave what they can or take what they need from The Little Free Pantry.

