

Scott Nill, of Port Huron, has a philosophy when it comes to volunteering. “Love multiplies, and there’s always enough to go around when you’re doing the right thing,” he stated.

Realizing the conversation was going to center on his own charitable endeavors, however, he fidgeted. “I just...I really support my wife,” he protested in mock dismay. His wife, Claudia, is also very community-minded, serving on various boards and committees throughout the years, and currently devoting a large portion of her time as a Mentoring Mom for Bridge Builders of Port Huron.

Thankfully, Scott eventually gave in, and was more than happy to tell about the call he has recently felt on his life to support the work being done by Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church in Warren, Michigan. The church is lead by Roger Facione, the former Executive Director of St. Clair County Community Mental Health, whom Scott worked for when he and Claudia first moved to Port Huron.

“I’ve always loved him, and his family are nice people,” told Scott. “Eight years ago he became ordained as a Lutheran minister. We went to his ordination, and we’ve always kept in touch.”

“When the bishop gave him the church, which is really in an economically depressed area down in Warren, he said, ‘Could you, with dignity and every courtesy, close the church within the next three months?’ That was almost three years ago.”

There were only thirty-five people worshipping at the church at the time. Instead of closing the church, though, Roger looked at the needs. In an area with high unemployment, substantial cases of domestic violence, sobering statistics in regard to child abuse and severe poverty, Mt. Calvary became an island of support for the neighborhood.

Scott listed some of the programs the church currently runs. “Roger started a soup kitchen; they have a head start program, a substance abuse counseling program, activities for seniors, and night school.” Indeed, the church provides educational services, counseling, substance use services, food, foster care and a number of other services important and necessary within the community.

“This is the only church in this neighborhood. It’s sort of the last spiritual outpost. They worship about 100 people regularly on a Sunday now,” Scott observed.

He spoke to Pastor Peter from Cornerstone Church about his visits to Mt. Calvary. “I said, ‘Boy, I just really have a heart for this ministry down there. I wonder if you’d be interested in going down to this Lutheran Church on Packard and Warren, and seeing this whole experience of what they’re trying to do down there.’ He just embraced the whole idea.”

After meeting with Roger and some of his church leadership, taking a tour of the area and spending a lot of time with the folks down there, Pastor Peter and Scott were in agreement that something had to be done. “I talked to Claudia, and we hatched this idea of the open house/fundraiser.”

Scott, who owns a Consultation Service LLC, gave numerous appeals throughout the area. “I’m saying to people, if you can write a check, that’s great. If you can’t, and you want to bring diapers, that’s great. If you can’t do that and you want to bring canned food, that’s great. If you can’t do any of that and just want to come and extend a hand of friendship to these guys who are doing this, and hear about what they’re doing, do that.”

Scott and Claudia opened their home on June 20th, 2009, and about 70 people attended, with a good representation from Cornerstone.

“It was a very successful event. We really appreciated all of the support from our friends. In addition to all the diapers and canned food that was collected, about \$2500 was raised to contribute to the important mission of this inner city church. We would like to do something like this again next year,” said Scott.

Empty-nesters, many may think Scott and Claudia have earned the right to a second honeymoon time of their lives. Their daughters, Marissa and Laura, are in their twenties. Marissa is a pharmacist and lives and works in Chicago. Laura is married to Trevor Watson and works as an Emergency Room Nurse in Lansing.

On the contrary; their house is about to be more full than ever. Currently, Scott’s parents live in their home. Soon, Claudia’s mother will live there, as well. “Giving back to your parents is very joyful,” he proclaimed.

When asked what motivates them to serve others with such abandon, Scott said, “There’s such depth of need out there; and then you go to church, and you hear Peter talking, saying it’s not about us. We really don’t have anything that isn’t Jesus’ anyway. I love when he talks that way, because it really isn’t our stuff, including our money. You know what? We’re put here to be in service to one another. That’s really beautiful to me, watching people respond to that.”