



Partners in Faith



Introduction

When we trace the original vision for the ministry of Habitat for Humanity, we find that its principles are rooted in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, and its source is the Bible. The scriptures teach us that through God's grace we are freely given new life in Christ, which leads us to follow Christ's example. We realize that all people have value because God created all people to live in relationship with one another and to care for each other, particularly the poor.

Our Mission Statement

"Habitat for Humanity works in partnership with God and people everywhere, from all walks of life, to develop communities with people in need by building and renovating houses, so that there are decent houses in decent communities in which every person can experience God's love and can live and grow into all that God intends."

Habitat for Humanity International

Founded in 1976 by Millard and Linda Fuller, Habitat for Humanity International seeks to end poverty housing worldwide. We are an ecumenical Christian housing ministry working to build partnerships with people in need of simple, decent, affordable homes. The houses are sold to partner families at no profit, through zero-interest loans. Habitat operates in more than 90 countries around the globe, where affiliates have built more than 300,000 homes.

Habitat is a hands-on, grassroots ministry that gives people the opportunity to put love into action. Every house we build is a sermon of God's love. It is our Christian faith that motivates us and enables our mission.

Habitat for Humanity West Central Minnesota

The West Central Minnesota Affiliate of Habitat for Humanity was founded in Kandiyohi County in 1993. Since its inception, four additional counties have joined the affiliate – Chippewa, Meeker, Renville and Swift Counties. Just as the goal of Habitat for Humanity International is to eliminate substandard housing across the planet, the goal of HFH WCM is to eliminate substandard housing in our affiliate area.

“Working in community allows the poorest of the poor to build self-esteem and the ability to develop ways of improving the quality of their lives, managing conflicts and participating in building their communities.”

-Nabil S. Abadir

The Church and Habitat

Habitat for Humanity was established to demonstrate the love and teachings of Jesus Christ. It is natural that the church –Christ's body in the world – should be a primary partner in Habitat's work because we both answer God's call to serve the poor.

How Churches Can Benefit Habitat for Humanity:

- Build a prayer network
- Establish a vision for transforming lives
- Maintaining your focus in living out the gospel of Jesus Christ
- Educate the community about the need for simple, decent, affordable housing
- Encourage families in need to apply for housing
- Supply compassionate volunteers and committee members
- Financial support, Tithing, Fund raising
- Distribute our materials amongst your congregation to attract new volunteers

How Habitat for Humanity Can Benefit Churches:

- Help people see the spirit of God at work outside the four walls of the church
- Help build the Church. Habitat for Humanity is a widely recognized and respected Christian organization
- A Habitat project can be just the spark that gets people excited about working in a Christian community
- Help a church fulfill its mission to minister to persons who are in need
- Attract new members and bring energy into the congregation
- Enable individuals to experience spiritual growth
- Be a means for identifying and developing leaders within your church
- Provide vacation bible camp curriculum to teach youth the message of Habitat
- Provides church members with a tangible opportunity to step out in faith and rely on God when the inevitable and unforeseeable problems arise.
- Give members with a variety of skills the opportunity to respond to the needs of others

Opportunities for Churches to become involved:

- Interfaith builds
- Building on Faith
- Apostles Build Project
- Make a multi-year commitment
- Sponsor a build (partially or fully)
- Participate in service trips locally and overseas
- Offer to facilitate devotions at a work site
- Financial contributions, special offering
- Provide meals for volunteers at work sites
- Identify landowners who may donate property
- Provide child care for partner families
- Identify business owners who may donate in-kind products and services

Why should my congregation get involved?

Shelter is a basic human need. Millions of people worldwide still face a future robbed of hope by the lack of adequate shelter. That is why Habitat for Humanity is determined that every one of God's people has a decent place in which to live. One of Habitat for Humanity's goals is to make shelter a matter of conscience and action, worldwide.

We need your help. Former President Jimmy Carter made the assessment that if every church and every synagogue built or repaired at least one home a year, we could totally transform the problems of housing and homelessness in the United States. What are we waiting for?

Many congregations become involved in this exciting ministry because one person is moved to action. This determined person is often the spark God uses to provide decent shelter for a family in need. Are you that person? Is God asking you to call your congregation to action? Your congregation can provide shelter for a family in need of simple decent housing.

Every Habitat for Humanity home your congregation builds or helps build serves as a symbol of God's grace. It is difficult to ignore such a tangible expression of love. The community notices when people work together as an instrument of God's love. Members of congregations experience a strong sense of unity and purpose when together they reach out to their neighbors in need.

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying "whom shall I send, and who will go for us?
And I said "here I am; send me!"
- Isaiah 6:8

Our Principles

Faith in Action

Here at Habitat for Humanity West Central Minnesota we believe people must reflect on Christ's love in their own lives by loving and caring for one another in word and in action in order to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ. As a Christian ecumenical organization, Habitat welcomes partnership from all people who share in the vision of eliminating poverty housing from the face of the earth.

We yearn for fundamental and energetic partners in faith. We want to put shelter on the hearts and minds of people in such a way that substandard housing and homelessness become socially, politically, morally, and religiously unacceptable in West Central Minnesota and around the world. Our goal can only be reached by partnering with individuals committed to the same purpose.

The Economics of Jesus

Habitat for Humanity uses the term "the economics of Jesus" to describe attitudes about money and resources that Jesus initiated. The economics of Jesus teaches us to incorporate scriptural wisdom to guide our work.

1. God blesses what we offer and turns it into the miraculous.

Just as Jesus fed thousands with the loaves and fish packed for a little boy's meal, God blesses our limited resources and meets the enormous need when we step out in faith and serve with love and compassion.

2. God expects us to share our resources.

It is greater to give than it is to receive. God does not mean for us to go hungry or to do without adequate clothing and shelter. We have to examine our needs and our wants and rethink what we do with our treasure. Habitat for Humanity continues this cycle of sharing through the concept of the tithe. Around the world, when people make a gift to a Habitat project, they begin a process that keeps on giving. In accordance with the Old Testament model of tithing, each Habitat project is asked to give a 10-percent tithe on the money raised locally to help build homes in third world countries.

3. Our work is a response to God's love. Habitat for Humanity homes are built on the concept of partnership. Just as Jesus told Peter to "feed my sheep" as a way for Peter to show his love for Jesus, we build houses as a response to Christ's love with no expectation of financial gain. Habitat's mission is to provide simple, decent, affordable homes through non-profit loans with affordable payments that do not burden the poor.

4. Grace and love abound for all, equally. In Matthew 20:1-16, Jesus tells the parable of the landowner who paid laborers in his field the same wage no matter how many hours they worked during the day. The metaphor of wages teaches us about something that has nothing to do with money. Jesus used this opportunity to proclaim that no person is of greater value than another. God's grace is a gift that is not deserved but is given freely to all.

Theology of the Hammer

Habitat for Humanity forms partnerships based on the belief of bridging theological differences by putting love into action. It is acknowledging that differences of opinion exist on many subjects, but we can unite in using a hammer as an instrument to manifest God's love. We can agree on the idea of building homes with God's people in need, and in doing so using biblical economics: no profit! We welcome you to build a partnership with us!

If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

-John 3: 17-18

Sponsorship

Locally

Make a multiyear commitment – Make a commitment to build one or more houses a year as part of Habitat for Humanities effort to eliminate poverty housing one family at a time.

Full sponsorship – Raise the funds and provide the labor to build an ENTIRE home! Funds depend on the amount of in-kind donations collected.

Partial sponsorship – Provide the labor and funds for a specific portion of a home, such as the roof.

Join a coalition – Take this opportunity to partner with local congregations to share the fruits and labors of funding and building a home. (Example – See Apostle’s Build)

Also see list of opportunities for churches

Globally

We also have opportunities to partner with families around the world and make a global change. Such opportunities include but are not limited to prayer, tithing, sponsoring a church relations staff member over seas, and mission trips.

“The challenge facing Habitat for Humanity is finding men and women on every continent and in every country who are willing to see beyond national, religious, cultural and material divides. We must attract people who are prepared to live out the teachings of Jesus even if it makes them unpopular.”

-Rev. John Stack

Events

Apostle's Building Project – This is a project where 12 churches come together in service, like the original 12 apostles of Jesus, to build a home from the ground up.

Building on the Dream – Fund a build a Habitat home as a way to honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Kick off the build or fundraising events on Dr. King's Birthday.

International Day of Prayer – On this day we pray for those inadequately sheltered, and we remember poverty housing is unacceptable.

Building on Faith – Habitat for Humanity International's annual celebration of church partnerships and stepping out in faith to support the Habitat mission. Building on Faith utilizes two emphasis of the Habitat Mission. First we focus on building, as that is our ultimate goal at Habitat to build homes. Second we focus on community worship and bring together the entire faith community to celebrate God and our work through him.

The four commitments of Building on Faith:

1. The congregation provides prayer support
2. Habitat is given appropriate access to church communication tools
3. Church provides a liaison to communicate with Habitat
4. Willingness to provide volunteer and financial support

Building on Faith concludes on the International Day of Prayer and Action for Human Habitat (3rd Sunday in September).

All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

- Galatians 2:10

Church Relations Materials

Bulletin Inserts

Miracle of Kingdom Build
Faith in Action
Myths and Truths
Theology of the Hammer
Did you know?
Litany for Shelter
Prayer for Community

Building on Faith Materials

BOF Brochure
BOF poster
BOF bulletin insert
Offering Envelopes
Planning for BOF manual

Sunday school Lesson Guide
Women's Build brochures
Planning a woman's build guide
Church relations brochure
Share the Blessings Calendar
House bank
Footprints of Jesus
HFHI fact sheet

Celebrations Manual
Devotions Manual
Apostle's build project manual
NIMBY – Not in My Backyard
Church Relations Planning Tool

Church Covenant Commitment Plaque
Partners in Faith Commitment level

***This manual is the words and compilations of Charline L. Bengtson, VISTA volunteer at Habitat for Humanity West Central Minnesota, as well as words and compilations from affiliates across the Nation.



Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is
the only thing that ever has.

-- Margaret Mead

P.O. BOX 1171
4078 Highway 71 NW
Willmar, MN 56201
Telephone: 320-231-2704
Toll Free: 1-877-926-6434
Fax: 320-231-0659
E-mail: hfhwcm@habitatwcm.org