For several years now, our Social Ministries team serves the children dinner once a week. Our team primarily pays out of pocket for the food and beverage that we serve. Each meal we prepare is approximately $60-$100.00 in cost. The number of people we serve varies, but we usually budget for 60 meals. We also prepare and serve for the Vacation Bible School program that they run after the school year is over. Our church does not have the cost of this program in the budget. Like many other churches, we operate on a deficit yearly. This year we were received grant funds from the Witness and Service Team. These grants are funded from Mission Support Giving from congregations around the Synod.

We had applied and received seed money of $250.00 grant from Thrivent to help us cover some of the cost for the 2015 Vacation Bible School Program. The grant helped us tremendously. We provided a healthy snack of fruit and vegetables when they came in around 3:30PM. We served a nutritional meal around 5:30PM. We then sent a healthy snack home with them at the evenings end. Pastors Tracy and Rhonda feel we need to nourish their bodies as well as their souls. The program starts in late afternoon until 7PM. It was designed this way mainly so the children get a nourishing meal during the course of the day.

There is something so special that happens when you surround these children with God's words and God's love. Everyone's goal is to show these children that even though their circumstances may be rough at home, this program is here for them. There are people who will pray for them and with them. There are people who will listen. We laugh together, we sing God's praises together, we dance to the uplifting music of the program. We feel so blessed to be a small part of this ministry. The prayers from the children at dinner time, the smiles on their faces when we feed them, and the hugs we receive, warm our hearts always.

Find more stories of how we are doing God's work with our hands at: nepsynod.org or visit our facebook page Mission Interpreters of NEPA Synod.