

Ogden Presbyterian Church 2018 Grant Report
Church Outdoor Block Party

▪ **What were you hoping to accomplish?**

The Block Party is modeled after UPT's "Big Lunch," and our goals were to make ourselves known in our community and reach new audiences, both in the neighborhood of our church and in the village of Spencerport, by offering an outdoor block party with food, music and games for neighbors of the church as well as community agencies, and people in need. After our Mission Study in 2017, we have been studying ways to connect with our neighbors. Giving away free food and entertainment is a good way to accomplish this. A few benefits included the "church" leaving the building, the church becoming a stronger and more connected part to the Ogden/Spencerport community, our neighbors being loved and feeling it.

▪ **Who was touched by your project or program?**

Many in our community were touched by this project. We gave away about 100 free tickets to folks such as homeless veterans, Senior Citizens, care givers from the nearby hospice home (Aurora House), our nearby neighbors, and some invited friends from far away. As well, our congregation was touched by two things: the act of giving and a great fellowship time.

▪ **How did this grant energize or transform your congregation or community?**

The congregation was energized by seeing so many folks giving of their time and energy. They also were amazed at how good it felt to get out of the building, visit with neighbors and do activities in the community that do not happen inside the building. The impact on the community is harder to measure. The visitors who came were impressed at what we were doing. The places we dropped the free tickets at were also impressed at what the church was trying to accomplish.

▪ **What did you learn from this project and what are your next steps?**

We learned that it can be hard to give away free food/tickets, there is a joyous spirit when people get together, we like hosting and doing these kinds of events, and we want to do more of it. The next steps are to expand the event to include more entertainment options, perhaps more food options and one of the biggest learnings is that we need to do this

event ecumenically. Next time we will try to incorporate other local congregations in this event.

- ***For Congregations: Please share a story of where you saw God in this project.***

At the event, a couple who had been part of Ogden Presbyterian Church a long time ago but had drifted away, came for the free food. They met up with some members they knew from way back, felt welcomed and loved by everyone, and decided to give us a try again. They have been attending worship, bible studies and participating in the life of the church ever since. And while that is certainly great, what is more important is that now that they are participating with the church, they have both expressed a renewed and invigorated spiritual life and are experiencing a deeper connection with their Creator God.

Thank you very much for the grant!!!