

COMMUNITY *cares.*

The beauty of restoration is that it is *always* possible, even during a global pandemic. In March as the Covid spread, we quickly realized caring for the community would require a pivot as drastic as the in-person/digital shift that was being planned for Sunday morning. The needs of the community were changing and the strategy for mobilizing hundreds of people would have to change as well. We began to look at the support we were already providing through partnerships with homeless shelters, food pantries and local schools to determine what support could continue and what new needs would arise. **Our goal was to #BeTheChurch - the hands and feet of Jesus during this crisis.** That was the beginning of Community Cares.

And while serving the community during this season has required many adjustments, we recognized by the end of the summer one of those adjustments would be uniting Community Cares and Community 4:12 under one umbrella. Combining COMMUNITY Cares teams with our Community 4:12 long term partnerships, like Giftmart and World Relief, positions us to catalyze restoration in our communities in new and exciting ways.

During this season our teams have hand stitched more than 4,200 cloth face masks shoring up supplies during a time when PPE was scarce and incredibly expensive. We launched two Community Freedom locations at correctional facilities here in Illinois and walked alongside more than a dozen immigrants as they worked toward citizenship. We continued to provide virtual Justice Series Events helping the community explore race and reconciliation during this turbulent time as well as enrolled our staff in a one-year journey pursuing racial justice with other pastors around the country. We're on track to provide over 5700 meals for residents of Hosed House experiencing homelessness. And building for the future, we're partnering with the Alive Center to open a location in Aurora focused on empowering the youth of today to become the impassioned, resilient leaders of tomorrow.

Under the Community Cares banner we'll continue working to: PROVIDE RELIEF, meeting the immediate needs of our community, DEVELOP PEOPLE through nurturing relationships, and work towards Holistic TRANSFORMATION in areas of education, race, poverty and incarceration. The beauty of restoration is that it is always possible.