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Pastor Jim Verkest, Mosinee UMC

*Philippians 2:4*

*“Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”*

The headlines of our area paper read ‘305 jobs lost at SNE’. It was further evidence of the terrible dislocation that is taking place in the housing industry. The bursting of the housing bubble has had serious and long terms impact on many individuals and corporations in our area. Corporations like SNE, Wausau Homes, Kolbe & Kolbe and more rely on a strong housing market to be successful. Many families and financial institutions are also struggling to keep from having homes sink into foreclosure. Then on top of all of this we have added the devastation of floods destroying homes, businesses, and crops. Only through the help of caring people can a total disaster be avoided.

In Paul’s letter to the Philippians, Paul encourages the Christian community to not just think of themselves but to think of others. Paul knew that we all suffer loss, illness, and brokenness in this world. When we do not have the support of a community around us, we end up in despair and hopelessness. Paul also knew that the secular culture would not often provide the kind of community support that people needed. This is why he writes to the church and exhorts them to be people of compassion and love to others. It is the faith community not the secular community that pulls together to make a difference in the lives of those

who are overwhelmed by life’s circumstances.

This is just as true in our world today as it was 1,950 years ago in Philippi. We may have a myriad of government agencies whose mission is to help when disaster strikes, but the truth is they are often of little real help to people. This certainly was revealed in the Katrina/Rita disaster of just a few years ago. FEMA, who was supposed to be our Federal government’s great resource in a time of disaster proved itself to be hopelessly inept to relieve the misery of the millions of people affected. In fact if you ask the people of South Louisiana and South Mississippi they will tell you “if it wasn’t for the help of Christian churches from all over the country, nothing would have gotten done to rebuild and relieve people’s suffering”.

Once again we are challenged by not only a weather disaster but a growing recession. We as a church must do all we can do to help the people of our community and beyond. We need food for the food pantry, flood buckets for southern Wisconsin, emotional and spiritual support for families under attack by these forces. Please let our witness be one of Christian love and compassion. We are Christ in the world, let His light shine in the darkness.