

Megachurch Expands Ministry with Practical Care for Their Community

Churches that are answering the call to go out into the community, spread the Good News of Jesus Christ and serve those communities, are coming up with new, practical ways to serve those struggling to get by.

With plans to grow their ministry in several new directions, Brookside Church of Omaha looks to reach out to the under-served in their community with a new food pantry and automobile repair shop.

Brookside, a Nebraska-based megachurch with a congregation of 3,000, applied for city approval to have the auto repair center on church property near Interstate 80 and L Street. The shop would be run by volunteers and would include services such as brake service, oil changes, troubleshooting and general maintenance.

This ministry will not be open to the general public however, as customers will be referred to the ministry by local schools and agencies that work with the under-resourced in the community.

There are no plans to charge for labor and they will offer parts at discounted prices or for free depending on each situation and repairs being conducted.

In a letter sent to city planners, Lead Pastor Jeff Dart explains that unreliable transportation can have a “crippling” effect on families struggling financially and are not located near any public transportation.

“Lack of transportation quickly leads to loss of employment

for adults and excessive school absences for kids,” he wrote.

The Omaha Planning Board granted Brookside’s request with a favorable recommendation for 22 acres to be rezoned and granted a conditional use permit for the auto shop to be built.

Brookside is also requesting to build a community food pantry to go along with the upcoming car repair center, saying the food pantry would help combat food insecurity within their community.

“We are a religious organization,” Dart wrote, “and these services to our community are a part of living out our faith as we give our church attendees an opportunity to serve and to build relationships with those in need around us.”

Brookside’s spokesman, Rob Hockney, says that these ministry projects demonstrate the church’s commitment to “caring for and establishing relationships with the community.

“We began with a clothing care center for kids in foster care and who are under-resourced,” Hockney said. “We’ve served many kids over the past five years through our clothing care center, but we are now excited to offer a more expansive experience.”

When churches like Brookside take the Word of God to heart, they make a lasting impact in people’s lives and the community in which they live, notably in passages like 1 John 3:17-18 which reads:

“Whoever has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, but closes his heart of compassion from him, how can the love of God remain in him? My little children, let us love not in word and speech, but in action and truth.”

Dart believes that community members who utilize the auto shop or food pantry “will experience the love of God as they are

treated with dignity and respect by volunteers.” {eo}

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