

## New Life Grant Report Perry Brick Presbyterian Church Corn Festival 2021

What were you hoping to accomplish?

Our goal was to provide an event that would help us to connect with people in the community. We wanted to offer an event with free entertainment and inexpensive food, allowing families to attend with minimal or no expense. We wanted the event to be welcoming to people of all ages, allowing us to share God's love and the many gifts he has given us.



Who was touched by your project or program?

Families, couples, and individuals from the community attended, and enjoyed the live entertainment, free games and prizes and food concessions. Members of the congregation also enjoyed providing the free event, welcoming, and interacting with those who attended.



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

The grant allowed the congregation to provide a free event for the community. Having the funds to hold a free event encouraged them—energized them—to put a great deal of time and effort into the planning and executing the plan for this community event, trusting God each step of the way. Being a small congregation, it required commitment from all members, and everyone stepped up to make the event a success.



What did you learn from this project and what obstacles did you experience?

The congregation which is small in numbers is also an aging congregation. This was not something new to learn but it was a realization that they will not be able to continue this event without help and the aging congregation will become an obstacle in the future.

Holding this event made them realize that they need to find ways to join forces with other congregations or organizations in the community that could help provide a larger and possibly younger work force. Working together with others would allow them to welcome others to work with them, connecting with individuals and giving them the opportunity to see God at work at Brick Church. While inviting people to attend provides the opportunity to interact, working together on an event is another way to connect with individuals and organizations.



Please share a story of where you saw God in this project.

God was at work in the planning of this event. Trying something new, inviting the community to a free event, was a leap of faith for Brick Church. The initial planning meant trusting God to lead the way. Then on Memorial Day our Clerk of Session passed, Cindy had been leading the way for the Corn Festival and suddenly she was gone. God was at work in the people that picked up the pieces and moved forward with the plan. I saw God in those people who understood how difficult it was to move on and with compassion and understanding they encouraged others. It pulled a close-knit congregation even closer together. God was certainly present as they worked.



The day before the event we worked on setting up tents. I saw God in the people that went out of their way to make sure everyone that showed up to work had an opportunity to help, to feel not just included but an important and useful participant in setting up and running the event. We had enough people to get the tent up and the top secured with ties, but a couple people handed off their ties to allow others who were waiting for a task. It didn't matter that they had to take the time to show them how the ties went on. Set up was more than just getting the job done, it was building connection between our own members and making people feel a part of what was being done.

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While the turnout for the Corn Festival was less than what we had hoped for, there were many blessings both during the planning and the actual event. We are planning to hold the event again this year, making some changes, hoping to attract more of the community. We are so grateful for the grant that we received which covered much of the expense which allowed us to make it a free event. We are grateful that God blessed us with a beautiful day and a wonderful spirit in the workers and those that did attend. We look forward to holding this event again and know that God will lead us along the way.