

Pastor Jim Klosterboer
Bethany Lutheran Church, Elkader, Iowa
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"Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world." - James 1:27

On Wednesday, November 12, Bethany members generously donated \$330 worth of groceries and paper-products (purchased locally) to the Food Pantry of St. Bridget Church in Postville. Then, on Sunday, November 30, hard-working, faithful, and generous members of Bethany collected over \$1,200 to be sent to the people in Postville who are without food. I hope that news encourages you and buoys your spirit.

Now it comes before us that court-approved bankruptcy budget includes \$50,000 a week for "Trustee Professional Fees" and \$5000 a week for "Professional Travel." The court-approved budget also includes \$15,000 a week for two "Operating Consultants" for a three-day week.

The money freely given at Bethany to feed the poor, the \$1,200, is approximately what it costs for one-hour's operation of the Trustee's office.

Yes, a portion of the plant is supposedly reopened. But unemployed workers who have pay coming MAY only get paid once the \$35,000,000 loan is paid, and the \$10,000,000 fine is paid, and the other secured debts are paid. Oh, and the lawyer-fees are paid. Until those obligations are met, many workers remain unpaid and the wages of those who have fled will go back into the coffers of Agriprocessors.

The people of Postville are our neighbors. All of them. ALL of them! Most are our brothers and sisters in Christ. Like unstoppable and angry rivers, the twin monsters of Greed and More Greed have washed over that town destroying hopes, dreams, jobs, property, and families. The destructive waters have not receded much - and the clean-up of Postville will take decades. Now we pray for the many people in Postville and the surrounding area who labor in the spirit of the Gospel to help those in need.

There will be those, of course, who say that the \$1,200 we raised last week is nothing compared to the need. That the gift is insignificant. Meaningless. But such self-appointed critics either don't know or have forgotten that we come from a people who have seen God work miracles through that which the world deems as paltry. And we can once again give thanks and praise to God for the faith of those at Bethany who have stepped up to help - putting their God-given faith into practice.

Remember the poor. Remember the poor. Remember the poor.
Thanks be to God for the riches God has given us.