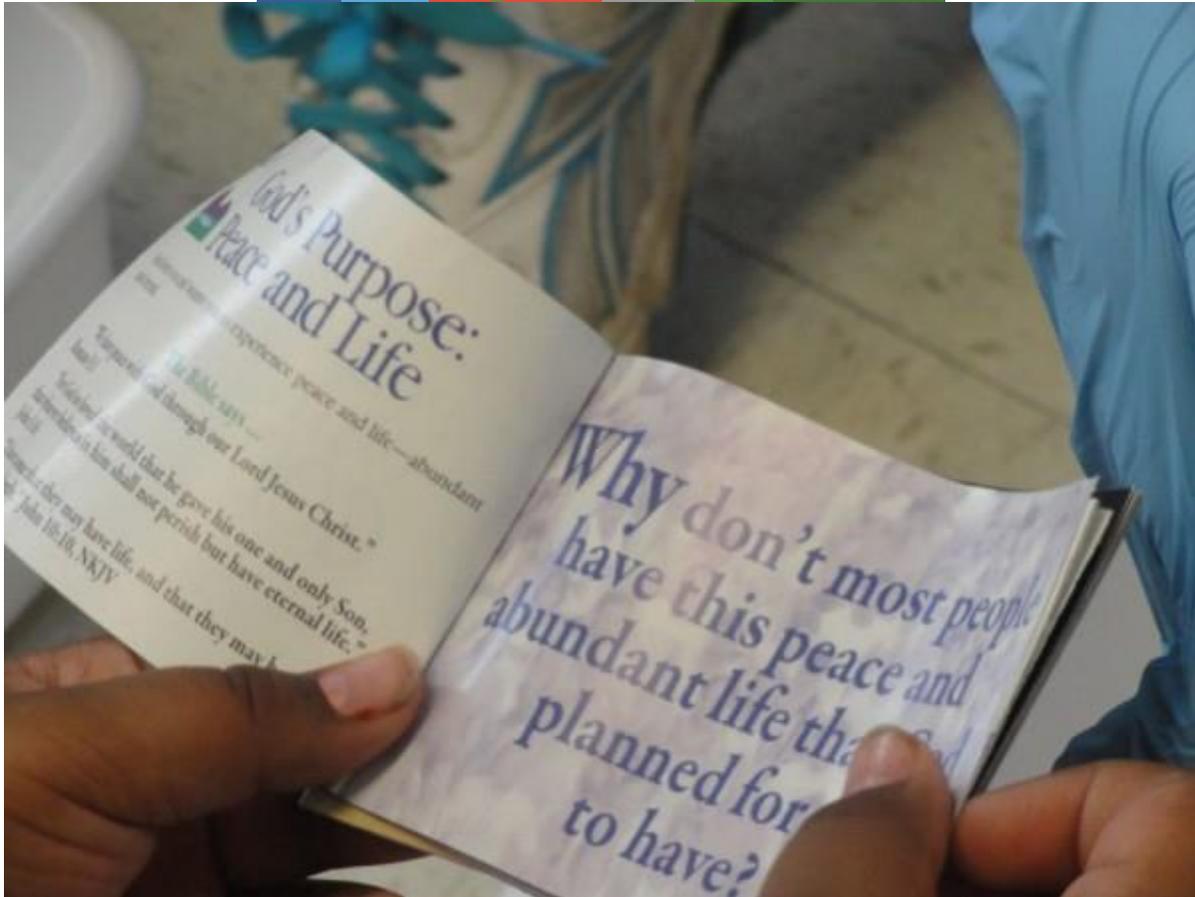


Church Hosts Foot-Washing, Shoe Giveaway for Kids

Rising Hope UMC and N.C. church partnered Tuesday to serve 250 children.

By Rachel Leonard (Patch Staff) - July 31, 2012 4:23 pm ET

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It's almost time for Deborah Roberts' children to head back to school, and money is tight at the with Mount Vernon family's home. So, it was a blessing Tuesday when Roberts' children, ages 5 and 7, each received a new pair of shoes through a partnership between and Calvary Church of Charlotte, N.C.

"It's a great deal," Roberts said. "It's helped us out a lot because they need the shoes."

The shoe giveaway program, which included a foot-washing and ministry for children by Calvary Church teenagers, distributed about 250 shoes to children in Mount Vernon and surrounding communities. The participating families signed up for the shoes ahead of time so the church had the proper sizes available for children and teens 18 and younger.

Calvary Church pastor Jim Cashwell said the ministry first partnered with Rising Hope last year.

"We love the opportunity just to reach out and share the Gospel with others, so that's why we're back again," Cashwell said. "This church really does a great job ministering to the community and reaching out to some folks who are kind of down and out, and this gives us a chance to train our young people in sharing Christ with others."

Calvary Church members held a shoe drive last month and collected about 1,000 pairs of new shoes, he said. The program is called "Samaritan's Feet."

Drew Colby, a seminary intern at Rising Hope, said the program takes place at Rising Hope due to the great need in the community.

“Part of the way they give away shoes is they have a brief foot-washing, which comes from the Gospel of John, where Jesus washed disciples’ feet really the night before he was killed,” Colby said. “So it’s really a beautiful thing.”

Mary Hamilton, who oversees community ministries at Rising Hope, said the church holds similar events several times a year.

“One of the things that I noticed when we were signing up people this particular time is that some of the parents were pretty happy that this was happening right before school, because ordinarily they would be going out and purchasing shoes for their children’s back to school,” Hamilton said. “So we’re really blessed by the timing of this, because the money they ordinarily spend on shoes they could spend on food or utility bills.”

Some of the parents stopping by Tuesday were collecting shoes for up to six children, she said. “So we’re just really glad that Rising Hope is in a position that we’re able to meet the needs of the community, because really, that’s why we’re here.”