

2024

FFC

Christmas  
Catalog



**First Federated**  
**Church** of Peoria

3601 N Sheridan Road  
Peoria IL 61604

“...For I was hungry  
And you gave me food,  
I was thirsty  
And you gave me drink,  
I was a stranger  
And you welcomed me,  
I was naked  
And you clothed me,  
I was sick and you visited me,  
I was in prison,  
And you came to me.”

*Matthew 25: 37-39*

First Federated Church of Peoria, Illinois

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A Message from the  
FFC Mission Committee

*Peace On Earth, Good Will To All*

You hold a special catalog that can help you experience the true meaning of Christmas. Almost two hundred years ago Charles Dickens wrote in his classic A Christmas Carol, "A few of us are endeavoring to raise a fund to buy the poor some meat, drink and means of warmth. We choose this time, of all others, when Want is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices".

As we look among our friends and family, we must surely feel blessed for God's gifts in our lives. Luke 12:48 tells us "To whom much is given, much will be required".

Unfortunately, even in our community and certainly around the world, others have not been as blessed. We can share some of our good fortunes by assisting others in the Peoria community who need a helping hand, thus rekindling their light and ours.

2 Corinthians 9:7 tells us "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

## **Additional Information**

First Federated's Christmas Catalog offers one of many ways for our members to "live their faith" by financially supporting agencies serving the less fortunate. Many of you also give of your time, and to you, we offer a heartfelt "thank you".

Mental health issues, especially among children, and food insecurity remain our community's most significant areas of concern. Therefore, your Mission Committee selected ten agencies with specific programs targeting these areas.

### **This is how the Christmas Special Offering works:**

Read through the catalog descriptions, decide which organization(s) you want to support, place your check in the envelope provided, and on the insert of the envelope, check the box for your desired agency(s). You may choose any number of agencies, up to 10. If you don't specify a recipient(s), your donation is equally divided among all 10.

You may also contribute via these options:

- Via the church's website [www.ffcpeoria.com](http://www.ffcpeoria.com), or
- Via the QR code on this page (access the church website from your phone).



If you make your contribution electronically, you must also email Cecelia ([cwalter@ffcpeoria.org](mailto:cwalter@ffcpeoria.org)) with a list of agencies you are supporting. If no email is received, your contribution is allocated (equally) among all 10 agencies.

The Mission Committee recognizes that a favorite agency of yours may not be one of the 10 agencies listed. In that case, please write the agency name on your contribution form. We will make sure they receive your donation.

### **Instructions for electronic payments**

Go to [www.ffcpeoria.org](http://www.ffcpeoria.org) and select the Give button at the top of the page. Then, scroll down near the bottom of the page and select the "Give Online" button. You will be forwarded to FFC's PayPal option.

To access the church's website via a QR code with your iPhone's photo app, frame the QR code and wait a moment. Then, press the link to [ffcpeoria.org](http://ffcpeoria.org).

If you need assistance with making an electronic payment, reach out to Theresa Pfeifer at [theresa.pfeiffer@eyefinity.com](mailto:theresa.pfeiffer@eyefinity.com)

# Center for Prevention of Abuse

## Focus: Mental Health

Children's Therapy at the Center for Prevention of Abuse (CFPA) provides individualized support for children dealing with trauma symptoms from witnessing or experiencing domestic violence or sexual assault. Children who undergo trauma often show symptoms like anxiety, aggression, intense fear, sleep disturbances, physical complaints, and difficulties in academic performance.

To help alleviate these issues, CFPA's master's level therapists provide early intervention and facilitate healing by guiding children through nurturing and non-threatening therapeutic activities, utilizing a variety of techniques such as Therapy Dolls, Sand Tray Therapy, Art Therapy, and Play Therapy. These methods are especially effective for younger children who may find it hard to express their confusing emotions or traumatic experiences verbally. CFPA's therapeutic interventions are designed to effectively address trauma-related challenges.

This approach helps children learn to manage their emotions, develop coping strategies, and acquire non-violent life skills as they begin their healing journey. When children feel safe and secure, they can cultivate new coping mechanisms. Early intervention and ongoing support from specially trained therapists are essential for helping children build healthy relationships, reduce trauma-related symptoms, enhance academic performance, and achieve greater success in their personal and professional lives.

In Central Illinois this past fiscal year, CFPA served 3,500 individuals with a range of domestic violence and sexual assault services, including 509 children. Through early therapeutic intervention, CFPA contributes to a safer and more peaceful community, assisting the most vulnerable in processing their experiences and building lifelong coping skills. CFPA firmly believes that everyone deserves peace - at home, at school, in the workplace, and within the community. Children should feel safe and secure in their homes and communities. We are sincerely grateful for your help in building a safe and peaceful community!

[www.centerforpreventionofabuse.org](http://www.centerforpreventionofabuse.org)

# FamilyCore

Family School Liaisons and Single Parents Program

Focus: Mental Health

## Family School Liaisons

Student needs are not always identifiable. How do you tell if children come to school hungry or if they are having trouble at home? FamilyCore Family School Liaisons (FSL) are trained to recognize behavioral, social, and emotional stressors. They provide crisis intervention, individual or group life-and-social skills training, home visits, classroom observations, and basic needs (school uniforms, food, school supplies). They help students regulate their feelings and offer a trusted adult to confide in. The goal is to meet children's social and emotional needs, so they are ready to learn. Family School Liaisons are in more than twenty schools across the Peoria and Tazewell counties and serve over 5,100 students annually.

Parent testimonial: "I've seen a big change in my child, and she has a great bond with her liaison."

Teacher testimonial: "I cannot imagine working without our FSL support. They are an important part of the lives of our at-risk students and in preventing others from falling into the risks that greatly affect academic success."

## Single Parent Support

It is well documented that, as a population, single parents face additional challenges to the stability of their family. For example, single-headed households may be at increased risk for food and housing insecurity, financial difficulties and may have problems accessing resources. In addition, children in these households may be at greater risk for school disruptions.

The Multi-Services for Single Parents (MSSP) Program supports single parents in navigating some of the challenges they may face, while walking alongside them to build self-sufficiency skills. This program, which has no cost to clients, helps single-headed households by assisting them in accessing community resources, building a stable home environment, and reinforcing positive parenting.

# Graceland, Center for Purposeful Aging

Focus: Mental Health

**Graceland Center For Purposeful Aging** formed in 2020 to address the needs of older adults in our community. Peoria is the 8th largest city in Illinois and the only one in the top 10 largest cities without a center designated to promote the wellbeing of older adults.

Loneliness is a growing epidemic among older adults as they retire from the workplace, families live further distances away, and community gathering geared for their age group decline.

Participation in community programs can be cost prohibitive for older adults living on fixed incomes.

Our vision seeks to advocate and create a culture within the Peoria Community which:

- Salutes aging as a privilege
- Designs opportunities for older adults to give back to the community by sharing their gifts, talents, and lived experiences,
- Generates experiences to encourage the overall well-being of older adults in an inclusive environment

Graceland seeks to serve older adults who desire to live happily, productively, and economically in their communities where they are recognized for the individuals they are rather than the age segment they belong to. Graceland, with office and meeting space in FFC's Life Together Center, is a community center where they can continue to grow in health, and spirit. We offer opportunities to socialize, take classes, exercise, and offer help for these adults to find resources available in our community.

Programs are free for participants. Current grant funding provides minimal resources to pay program coordinators and purchase supplies. We are currently seeking additional grants for future growth.

Your contributions will help us to:

- Purchase supplies for refreshments
- Assist with marketing costs
- Purchase supplies for program materials

[www.gracelandcenter.com](http://www.gracelandcenter.com)

# Hult Center for Healthy Living

Focus: Mental Health

Hult Center for Healthy Living has been serving the Tri-County community since 1990 providing health education to people of all ages. Our commitment to empowering people to address their own mental health issues as well as assisting others began in 2013 with the acquisition of the Mental Health Association of Illinois Valley. This was a pivotal point for the Hult Center team to focus on helping our youth, adolescents, families and health providers navigate mental health matters through health education.

Today, the Hult Center for Healthy Living continues to provide programs and services to improve our community's most significant health concerns. We have continued to see a growing need in mental health concerns for people of all ages, and particularly among our youth. Multiple community health assessments have been conducted locally with results demonstrating that anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts remain impacting our community.

How has Hult Center responded to this? Our team has worked to respond to the growing mental health concerns by expanding programs and services to help improve mental health and foster social emotional learning. While we still provide the traditional classroom and community-based suicide prevention education and trainings we always have, our team has expanded to "upstream" suicide prevention by incorporating social-emotional learning at much earlier ages. Social emotional learning provides youth as young as pre-kindergarten with coping and resiliency skills that will continue to grow through adulthood. Research continues to demonstrate that resiliency and coping skills are key to managing adversity that is sure to present later in life. Our classroom-based social-emotional programs serve thousands of students each year. Hult Center's team is also working hard to equip medical residents, nurses, providers, faith-based groups, counselors, and other professionals and community members who reach a high number of youth and adults so that they, too, can identify mental health warning signs and get persons at risk to help.

Your donation will support the continuation of these mental health and suicide prevention programs. Thank you for your consideration in helping Hult Center for Healthy Living to "empower people to live healthier lives."

[www.hulthealthy.org](http://www.hulthealthy.org)



# Loaves & Fish

Focus: Food Insecurity

On November 24, 1994, the loss of one Saturday food serving program in downtown Peoria was the start of a new ministry at Peoria First UMC. Loaves & Fish is a weekly ministry providing food and personal hygiene items to those in need each and every Saturday.

From the very beginning guests came into the church, ate a hot meal together, and received a few take-home options. At the end of the pandemic, we asked our guests what their needs were. The overwhelming answer was that they needed food to last the week and not just one meal a week. Loaves & Fish made a change and eliminated the hot meal. Today, our pantry tables look like a small grocery store. Guests are given a bag and are able to “shop” for items they and their families need.

Loaves & Fish has grown from serving 60 individuals to an average of 215 guests each Saturday. This ministry has become much larger than we ever imagined, and it takes an average of 30 - 40 volunteers each week to serve. Volunteers come from Peoria First UMC; other local churches; area high school and college students; service groups; and those serving community service hours. Over 30,000 different volunteers have given their time to the Loaves & Fish ministry.

Loaves & Fish has truly evolved into a community needs ministry.

On the first and third Saturdays of each month, a medical clinic is available to our guests. Over the years, the clinic has provided valuable health care and health information to our neighbors, saving lives in some cases. Thanks to a relationship with the Methodist College of Nursing, the clinic hosts fourth year medical students that serve alongside our volunteer nurses.

Many years ago, our guests came to us and said, “You are taking care of feeding our bodies each week, but we are still spiritually hungry.” Many of those we fed on Saturday had no way to get to a church on Sunday. With that, we began a small Bible study that grew and evolved into a weekly worship service. Today the ALIVE worship service averages 60 guests each week.

Together, we serve as the hands, feet, and heart of Jesus as one family under a loving God,

<https://fumcpeoria.org/loaves-and-fish>

# Midwest Food Bank

Focus: Food Insecurity

As a faith-based organization, Midwest Food Bank's (MFB) mission is to share the love of Christ by alleviating hunger and malnutrition locally and throughout the world and providing disaster relief -- all without discrimination.

MFB'S four core programs are:

- Food for Nonprofit Partners (food pantries, soup kitchens, residential programs, and child feeding programs),
- Disaster relief in concert with The Salvation Army and other partners,
- Tender Mercies, MFB's nutritious bagged meal of rice, beans, and soy protein, and
- Hope Packs, MFB's student feeding program that provides food-insecure children with supplemental weekend food.

MFB provides industry-leading food relief to those in need while feeding them spiritually. MFB has ten US and two international locations and is committed to supporting the Peoria community despite today's challenges of:

- 25% increase in food demand
- 58% increase in overall food purchasing costs
- 26% increase in fuel and transportation costs

MFB is on track to distribute over \$40 million of food to 340+ nonprofit partner agencies in 2024, but we need your help. With your financial support, the diligence of MFB staff, and collaboration with volunteers, we can continue to do our best and trust that God will do the rest.

[www.midwestfoodbank.org/locations/peoria-il](http://www.midwestfoodbank.org/locations/peoria-il)

# Neighborhood House

## Focus: Food Insecurity

Food insecurity dramatically increased during the pandemic and has grown with skyrocketing cost of living. Because we are no longer in an emergency state as a country, the government has also reduced SNAP benefits, compounding upon the limited food access that many individuals were already experiencing. Neighborhood House is committed to supporting our community through all life stages and is mission-focused on ensuring no one goes hungry. We serve over 1,000 local homebound senior citizens annually in our Meals on Wheels program throughout Peoria and Tazewell counties.

Neighborhood House also works to eliminate food insecurity experienced by youth in Peoria's community through our after-school program. Using company vehicles, Neighborhood House staff picks up children from school and brings them back to our facility for tutoring, enrichment activities, and a hot meal all within a safe environment. Recently, we have expanded our services to include all-day activities during scheduled District 150 breaks. In these programs, Neighborhood House works to provide nutritious meals to supplement what the children would normally receive from school because when school stops, that shouldn't mean meals stop too.

Neighborhood House's Food Pantry and Sunday Meals programs help to address food insecurity among the adult population. We are proud to host our pantry twice monthly and Sunday Meals each week to support our community. In one food pantry alone, we distribute approximately \$5,000 worth of food to those we serve, which we couldn't do without the generosity of our donors. With your support, Neighborhood House will continue striving to meet the community's growing needs.

### Meals on Wheels

Senior Citizen's Meals for a Month

\$120

Senior Citizen's Meals for Six Month

\$720

### Critters Meals on Wheels

Senior Citizen's Pet for a Month

\$42

Senior Citizen's Pet for Six Months

\$250

### Food Pantry

One Food Pantry Box

\$100

## Paws Giving Independence

Focus: Mental Health

Since 2008, Paws Giving Independence (PGI) has been an all-volunteer organization dedicated to training and placing service and facility dogs. PGI's service dogs provide support for individuals with disabilities, helping them regain independence and navigate daily tasks with confidence. Additionally, PGI places trained facility dogs for schools, therapy centers, law enforcement, and child advocacy settings, offering comfort, support, and emotional healing to those in need. Our ability to place dogs at no cost to recipients is a testament to the generosity of its donors and volunteers and is all made possible by community contributions. First Federated was one of our first community partners.

One of our recent mobility recipients, Jamie, wanted to share her story with you. "In April of 2022, I faced a life-altering injury, and the medical professionals told me I would never walk again. They didn't mention how this would strip me of my independence, making simple tasks like picking up dropped items feel impossible. Oliver has become an extension of myself, providing the independence and confidence I thought I had lost forever. We share a bond so strong that I feel he anticipates my needs before I do. Each night, after he helps me settle into bed, I thank him for supporting me throughout the day. I am endlessly grateful to all of you for being part of Oliver's journey and helping me regain my life."

A facility dog was recently placed at Peoria High School and her handler shared this story. "Penny is a perfect fit for our school and has already become a vital part of our school culture. She brings out a softer side of my students, many are usually on the defensive. I had a student with Autism who refused to come into class daily, but when he saw Penny, he came right in and sat with her. It was a major first step. Everyone is constantly amazed by her intelligence, responsiveness, and gentleness. We know she will make a great difference for our school; she already has made a difference."

PGI has developed strong partnerships with Bradley University and Illinois State University, where student trainers gain valuable hands-on experience working with the dogs and our recipients. This fosters a sense of community involvement and ensures the next generation will see they can go on to make a difference in their own communities after graduation.

The collaboration with Logan Correctional Center is particularly impactful. Not only does it provide critical training for the dogs, but it also empowers incarcerated women with valuable skills that can help them reintegrate into society upon release.

First Federated Church's decade-long support plays a pivotal role in sustaining PGI's mission, as you help to ensure that PGI remains able to serve individuals and communities in need. We are very grateful for your support.

[www.givingindependence.org](http://www.givingindependence.org)

# Peoria Grown

## Focus: Food Insecurity

Peoria Grown is dedicated to addressing food insecurity in Peoria by providing fresh, affordable, and nutritious food to underserved populations. We aim to reduce health disparities and improve wellness in lower-income communities through better access to healthy food and education. We also strive to create a self-empowered and self-reliant community where individuals can take charge of their health and food security. We operate two Market 309 locations: one at Trewyn Park on Sundays and another at Bradley University every Friday during the school year.

### Core Programs:

- **Market 309:** Fresh, affordable produce is available at our Trewyn Park location on Sundays and Bradley University on Fridays. We offer produce at prices lower than grocery stores, making healthy food accessible to community members and students.
- **Fruit Stands:** We partner with local community centers and nonprofit agencies to provide free fresh fruit and healthy snacks throughout the day, ensuring everyone can access nutritious options.
- **Nutrition & Wellness Classes:** Led by local dietitians and medical professionals, these classes teach valuable cooking skills and healthy food choices. Participants take home ingredients to recreate the recipes at home.

Your donation helps sustain these programs and supports our community's health. Here's how your contribution impacts Peoria Grown:

- **\$180** – Replenishes one of our fruit stands with fresh produce.
- **\$150** – Covers supplies and ingredients for one nutrition class.
- **Recurring Donation** – Provides ongoing support to sustain the Market 309 locations and our programs, allowing us to plan and budget effectively for the future.

You are investing in a healthier, more self-sufficient community by supporting Peoria Grown. Together, we can provide access to nutritious food, valuable education, and opportunities for better health for all.

# Peoria Public Schools Foundation

Focus: Food Insecurity

*Peoria's 61605 zip code is among the U.S. Census data's  
100 poorest ZIP codes in the country.*

Create a Brighter Future for Peoria Public School Students  
Not all students have access to the resources they need to succeed. Students face a variety of obstacles which makes it harder for them to thrive socially and academically.

We believe that every student deserves the opportunity to succeed, The Peoria Public Schools Foundation recognizes that education is key to breaking cycles of poverty and promoting individual and community success. By providing support and resources, the foundation aims to empower all students to overcome challenges and reach their full potential.

Our key areas of support include:

**Emergency Funding:** We provide funds to help students in need of food, uniforms/clothing, rent and utilities assistance, and more  
**Programs:** Our many programs, such as Career Exploration, Adopt-A-School, mentoring support, and Little Free Libraries, are essential to our mission.

**Grants for the Classroom:** each year, we provide Classroom, STEM, and Field Experience grants to enhance the classroom experience.

**Scholarships for Students:** We have 25 unique scholarships available to our high school seniors.

Your generosity transforms the lives of children in our schools and creates a lasting impact within our community.

[www.ppsfoundation.org](http://www.ppsfoundation.org)

*May the joy and wonder of this  
holiday season be with you,  
your family, and your friends.*

Your 2024 Missions Committee

Marylee Bales  
Sally Stone  
Karen Henderson

Greg Johnston  
Cheryl Resnick  
Janet Vaughn

Theresa Pfeiffer - Moderator



**First Federated  
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