

Good morning! Last week our dear friend Barbara Rhodes passed away, after a long and difficult battle with cancer. Barbara was an unusual person and everyone who knew her was impacted by her life. In 2012, Barbara helped to start a local ministry in our church building in Culpeper, called "The Place." The Place was a five day a week drop-in center for senior adults. Through The Place, Barbara helped to feed people, locate housing, and be a support for lonely and struggling older adults. Barbara staffed it with volunteers and some of the seniors said that Barbara literally saved their lives. One woman came as a homeless person who did not speak and did not want to be touched. Through Barbara's efforts, Laura is now laughing, knows people's names and is an active participant. Pam and I supported Barbara just last month when she was raising money and awareness for suicide prevention, even as she was battling for her own life. I cannot recall a single conversation with Barbara when she failed to make a point of lifting me up and encouraging me. We visited her in the hospital just a few days before she died and I'm so glad we had one last chance to be with her. We will miss her---with her passing, many will feel the pain of loss. When I read today's passage recently, I thought of her. Let's read it together:

And don't forget to do good and to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God. **Heb. 13:16**

Several years ago, the Virginia Baptist Mission Board promoted an effort in locations around the state called "Impact Virginia". The idea was that Baptist youth from all over the state would come to an area and work in teams under adult supervision to help people in need by making repairs to their homes. Of course, our *Lutheran* congregation was not considered a likely group to participate in this Baptist effort. When I mentioned it to Barbara though, she was enthusiastic, saying, "Wow! How can we be a part of this?" I told her that they were looking for Baptist congregations to provide lunches. Barbara immediately organized our (Lutheran) Women's Group to provide meals. As you might imagine, ours was the only non-Baptist group participating in the effort. I remember when Barbara organized Thanksgiving and Christmas meals at our church for people who didn't have anywhere to go to celebrate those holidays. Each time, we fed more than 100 people. She said, "Can you imagine that many people in Culpeper not having a place to go on Thanksgiving and Christmas?" Barbara was a life-saver, a good friend...and a world-changer. She might not have been able to change the whole world---but she could change *somebody's* world. In today's passage we are reminded not to forget to do good and share with those in need. Why? Because God has chosen this as a way of loving and serving people. This morning, are you doing good and sharing with those in need? The Bible tells us to do it...and God really likes it!