

Stories from UNITE! COBB Geo-Area 4

The Power of Connecting and Conversation

St. Paul United Methodist Church is a church of 430 members that's been around about 45 years. In recent years our neighborhood has become a transitional community and our congregation gradually became less connected to our neighbors. We've been looking for ways to reconnect and make a difference in our immediate community. When I learned about the first Area IV Collaboration meeting, I leaped at the opportunity to connect with other leaders and organizations in our community and learn how our congregation could participate. Through a series of meetings and contacts, we've been able to connect with Bells Ferry Elementary School, just a mile from our church.

Through supportive conversations with the social worker, principal, and others we're finding ways that a congregation our size can make an impact. We're currently collecting mittens, gloves and hats for the school's Giving Tree for needy families at Christmas. In 2012, we'll be sending volunteers to read with children and help out in the media center. As we grow in our relationship with the faculty, staff and children, other ways we can help will come our way. Our congregation is very excited about these opportunities to reconnect and make a difference in our community.

Dana Overton-Garrett, Pastor of St. Paul United Methodist Church

Marietta, GA