

## *Blessings in the midst of trials*

Dear faithful friends,

In this Thanksgiving season of gratitude to God, I want to thank all of you—our supporters who contribute through prayers and monetary gifts to Crossroads Community Center.

I'm happy to report that some wonderful things are happening here; but honestly there are also trying things—like the gun violence in our community. More than ever we see why it was God's will to place Crossroads here over 50 years ago—to be a blessing in the midst of trials

Our fall program is in full swing. In Middle School Club we're working with about 30 youth, and over half are young ladies. We push the kids to shut off cell phones and put away tablets for games and group interaction. And they seem to love it! Our Bible studies focus on Jesus as the Prince of Peace and how God's perfect love casts out all fear. The youth say that this is a comfort in light of the gun violence that they see every day.



*Miss Darlene leading the youth in the "spoon" game.*

Regarding Middle School Club, we also ask you to touch and agree in prayer for the Lord to send us a young sister to help mentor the girls in our youth group. With the issues many of them face, it is not the easiest group to work with! In fact it's challenging! But they are faithful in coming, so we are faithful in working with them.



*Middle school hotdog roast in back yard*

Over the past year the Lord has been laying on our hearts the need for some kind of informal worship service in the neighborhood. Many community people who receive emergency food have asked us to do this. So, for the past four weeks we have a Wednesday evening community dinner at 6:30 followed with a worship and the Word service for the neighborhood. As many as 35 people have shown up, and they keep coming.



*Evening chapel with Pastor Juan. Neighbor Rodney Winn on drums*

During this season we ask you to remember Crossroads in your prayers and in your giving so that we can continue to evangelize, disciple, and demonstrate the Gospel in word and deed to the people of Fairhill and beyond.

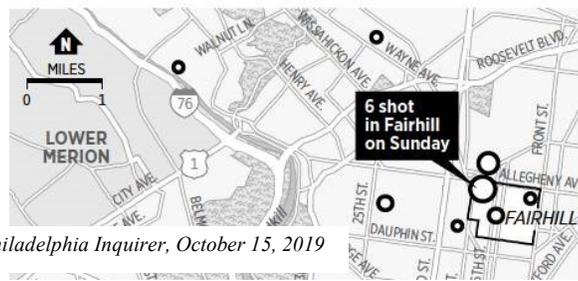
Juan Marrero, M. Div.  
Executive Director

**Violence in Fairhill** has increased recently: a lot of it is due to drug trafficking from the opioid epidemic and some is senseless killing from old grudges.

Recently a house was shot up, and an infant was killed; other small children have been shot in the crossfire. Kids coming to our youth groups talk about their fears and anxiety. We teach about Jesus as the Prince of Peace. Crossroads is an embodiment of that—the one place where they can find peace. Pray that our staff can communicate and demonstrate the love and peace of Christ.

**Recent Shootings in Philadelphia**

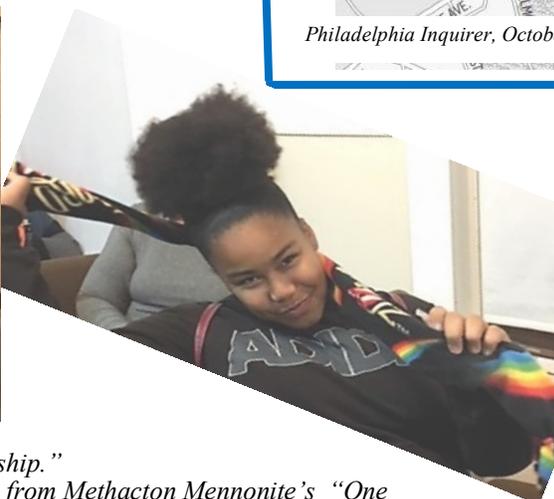
From Friday evening through Monday morning, two people were killed and 23 others were wounded by gunfire, including six who were shot Sunday afternoon in Fairhill.



Philadelphia Inquirer, October 15, 2019



Above, Community meal before “Word and Worship.”



Middle: Genesis models her scarf from Methacton Mennonite’s “One Stitch at a Time” ministry.



Far right– autumn tradition of dunking for apples.

**A NEW MINISTRY—COMMUNITY WORSHIP**

In October we began inviting neighbors for a hot meal on Wednesday evenings followed by informal worship.

One neighbor who pushed us to have a community worship service is an elderly woman, a regular emergency food client. Virtually homeless, she and her daughter live in an unheated garage (and pay \$300 a month!). She would tell us, “I want to come HERE for church!”

She and her daughter come every Wednesday evening for a hot meal and worship. She asks for prayer every time. We believe that she feels loved as she worships with other people from the neighborhood that she knows.

Before Easter we drove around Fairhill streets and delivered a box with food and a chicken for Easter dinner. A young lady who received a box came to Christ Centered Church the following week where she made a commitment to Christ. Two weeks ago she appeared on a Wednesday with three family members. They needed emergency food. We told her about the community meal; and they stayed, but the people that came with her were quite uncomfortable. They warmed up during the meal, however, and during worship even started clapping along to the music. They have returned every Wednesday evening since, and two have started attending Christ Centered Church.

Our social ministries and emergency food program also seem to have more depth since we began the community worship service. Some people tell me that they would not be accepted in most churches, but they do feel welcome here.

It is also a blessing to see a music team come together made up of Crossroads youth and graduates of Philadelphia Mennonite High School. They are willing to give their time and talents to serve the Lord and the people of Fairhill.

- Pastor Juan



Gathering for worship Wednesday evenings at Crossroads