

**Chesapeake Christian Center -
Blessing Room
Agency History**



Early History

During the 1980s or early 1990s a woman at the church named Debbie Hale said that she had a “calling” from the Lord to begin a Blessing Room where people could donate clothing and the ladies of the church would distribute the clothing to people in need.

Rev. David Boggs, an assistant Pastor took it over in the late 1990s and then the Blessing Room sort of died. He was more interested in formal ministries of the church, such as worship and Sunday School.

It is important to remember that in many Evangelical Churches ministries are begun by individuals. These programs are not supported from the pulpit and are not a line item in church budgets. They grow and continue as long as someone owns responsibility for them.

After David Boggs moved on in about 2002, a woman named Barbara Shanahan took over. She worked with some older ladies in the church, primarily from the Woman’s ministry, and resurrected the program. It was largely her energy that revived the Blessing Room. She spent hours on the phone encouraging women to volunteer their time. She also lobbied the Pastor so that the church would create space.

The church did create space. The Blessing Room occupies a small room close to the entrance to the church where the ladies keep the clothing. The ministry is open one day a week in the mornings and the ladies gather and put the clothing on racks in the front entrance to the church. The ladies also operate a small food pantry, a recent addition to the Blessing Room.

The ladies take the clothing and food out of the small room and place the items on racks in the lobby of the church. Clients come into the church lobby and select the items that they need. The ladies from the church approach the clients to talk about their relationship with the Lord. No one registers the clients. This process is repeated every time the Blessing room is open.

Current

Barbara Shanahan has been a member of the church since 1980 and took over the Blessing Room ministry recently. The ladies pray together and Barbara maintains contact with the ladies during the week. There is no formal Board, no formal Budget, and no formal operating procedures. "We do as the Lord tells us." This means that the ladies will decide to get together to carry out the function of the Blessing Room. "we do not need formal rules - we follow the Lord."

A large part of the Blessing Room is meant to "convert" the "lost" and the ladies will chat with the clients as they drop by for clothing. "Do you know the Lord" they will often ask. The ladies in the Blessing Room maintain no statistics about numbers converted "we just do the Lord's work." The ladies will chat among themselves about how a client from last week is back this week.

The church bulletin does advertise the Blessing Room and the Blessing Room does receive donations of clothing and food from members of the congregation. The Pastor does not support the Blessing Room, but does specifically mention the ministry from the pulpit. Lack of formal endorsement from the Pastor is typical of many Evangelical ministries.

Often people drop by and donate clothing. There are no formal rules and the ladies sort of just do whatever they feel "led" to do. In the end, the work gets done and the Blessing Room serves many people; as many as 2 to 7 people per day.

Conclusion

The Blessing Room is an active outreach ministry that is basically run by 3 to 5 senior ladies at the church. They feel "led" by the church to operate the Blessing Room, but the only support they receive from the church is the donation of space. The greatest challenge the Blessing Room faces is that it is led by senior ladies and when these ladies become, tired, die or become infirm; the ministry may not continue.



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