

RAISING SUPPORT BY MEANS OF SUPPORT LETTERS

An expert in the law asked Jesus this question: “Teacher which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:35-40)

It is Jesus who has called us to Love God and Love our Neighbor. As a result a group of us are going to Slaytersville, Kentucky to offer support and assistance to our neighbors. We are going, but we will need the help of others in our communities of faith and our families and friends to send us on our way.

The earliest followers of Jesus referred to themselves as a “body”, a group of people who support one another in their life in Christ. Each part of the body is essential to the other parts. That’s how a body works. No one part is more important than another. When one or many parts of the body need help, the other parts step up and do what is necessary for the survival of the whole body. We’ve been called to be those who “go” but we cannot do it without the help and support of the rest of the body. But we need to let them know what we are doing. That is why we are asking you to write a support letter; to let the body of Christ know what we are doing and to ask for their support. We want to invite as many people as possible to join us as we serve in Appalachia.

This doesn’t just mean the people in your church or faith community. It also means your family and friends who know and love you and would love to support you. We need as many people as possible praying for us. How else do you think we are going to survive that many days living and working together? 😊

Everyone will be responsible for sending out *ten (10)* support letters (but more is certainly acceptable). Prayer support is the main thing we’re asking for. And, if you would like, asking to help out financially with a \$10 or \$20 donation (but more is certainly acceptable). The money isn’t the main point: prayer is.

All funds that come in will be put into a larger pool toward our goal. That way, if someone ends up with not enough money, there will be enough in the larger pool to cover them. If we raise more than our total goal the extra money will be given to our hosts at Appalachia Service Project (ASP) www.asphome.org

So, here are some helpful hints about how to do this sort of thing.

- The goal is to let your faith community, your family and your friends know of your plans and desire to go to love your neighbors in Appalachia this summer & to give them an opportunity to participate with you in this project through prayer and financial support. **As you reread your letter, ask yourself if this is communicated.**
- Spend some time in prayer about your letter as well as the people you should send it to. Make a list of at least **10** people to send it to. Again, more is very much acceptable – some people on past Love Journey trips have sent out over 100 letters.
- The basic format should follow this outline:

Dear Friend, (or some other greeting)

First Paragraph: Greetings, salutations, and an explanation of what we are doing this summer. Make sure you include the following details in that opening paragraph:

Who: Who is going? You and 13 others from your church or faith community.

What: We're going to help provide warmer, safer, drier homes for those in need.

Our hosts are Appalachia Service Project www.asphome.org

When: July 16-24, 2022

Where: Appalachia...specifically Slayersville, Kentucky...more specifically individual families living there

Why: You can state why you are going on this trip, why you feel that serving those in need is important, why you feel like as a follower of Jesus you are taking part in this trip, etc. Put some thought into this.

How: We will be driving to Slayersville, Kentucky in rented vans.

Second Paragraph: The reasons behind your desire to be a part of this Love Journey to Appalachia and we'll be doing there (building relationships, providing assistance, construction, rehabilitation, etc.) You may want to mention God in this paragraph. :-)

Third Paragraph: An explanation of your desire and need to raise prayer support. And, if you want, asking for help in covering the \$100 per person cost. Make sure you include the fact that we've raised over **\$10,000** by working at *Lambeau Field* last year. Please make sure you stress the importance of prayer and make sure that it doesn't sound like you are just asking for financial support and that's all. Let them know that in order for this trip to be possible, we need people to partner with us. Remember: The backbone of this trip is prayer. In fact, talk about your need to raise prayer support **BEFORE** you mention money.

Fourth Paragraph: Thank the person for their support and for their consideration of being a part of this opportunity. Let them know that you will be in contact with them after the trip to say thanks and let them know how it all went in Appalachia.

Closing: ** Add a short, personal, handwritten note on each letter. ** Something like, "Hi Grandma Wendy, I love you! Love, Wanda". **THIS PERSONAL NOTE ON EACH LETTER IS ESSENTIAL!!**

Other Suggestions . . .

- Grab the reader's attention with a good opening sentence, story, etc.
- Your letter should be no more than one typed page (front only). Explain the details but try not to get wordy.
- Have a parent or spouse or friend proofread your letter and help you edit it. They will be able to give you helpful hints and help you brainstorm (as well as check for typos)!
- Make sure you communicate that this ministry cannot be done without the support of the others, the Body.
- Send thank you notes to each person who supports you with prayer and/or finances. (IMPORTANT)
- Make sure you send a follow-up letter after the trip thanking people for their support and let them know how the trip went, what you experienced in Appalachia, what you learned, ways you felt connected to The Vine, how you branched out, etc.

- Include in your letter the ways people can donate. Checks should be made out to St. Thomas Church and have them put “Appalachia 2022” in the memo line. Make sure you mention to not write the check to you personally but rather to **St. Thomas Church**. Please have support forms and financial support sent to **YOU** and not to St. Thomas. This way you will know who has supported you and you can write thank you notes. Include at the bottom of your letter a support form that looks like the example below that people can send back to you. You can drop
- People can also donate online at www.stthomaswi.com/give and they can put “Appalachia 2022” in the memo/notes space. This is by far the best and easiest way for people to donate as a lot of people don’t even bother writing checks any more 😊

Support Form

Yes! I would like to be a part of Wanda Maximoff’s involvement in the 2022 Appalachia Love Journey by committing:

_____ Prayer Support
 _____ Financial Support in the amount of \$_____

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please complete this form and send it to:
 Wanda Maximoff
 1234 Main Street
 Anytown, WI 54321

Please make checks payable to: St. Thomas Church OR give online at www.stthomaswi.com/give

*Important: You may want to change the name & address to yours unless you want to raise support for Wanda.
 PS We know this is humbling for many people but relying on others rather than just yourself is the Way of Jesus*

Each of us needs to have our letters written and sent out in the mail on or before Sunday, June 26.

Please send out thank you letters on or before Saturday, August 6.