



Festival of Sharing 101

What is Festival of Sharing?

Festival of Sharing is an ecumenical response to poverty, hunger, and injustice. This means we are a variety of denominations (approximately 30!) working together. Our goal is to promote and support projects and programs by providing funding and resource goods. This often equates to gathering packs and kits for agencies like food pantries, foster and adoption programs, and more.

What is a Sharefest?

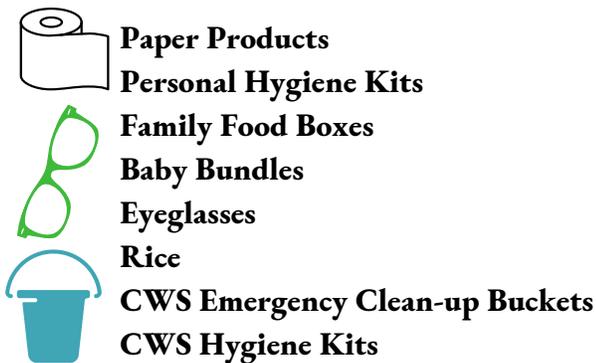
When you hear the term "Sharefest," this refers to events we have, at which we collect the packs, kits, and funds recognized in the booklet. We take this time to engage in service, worship and fellowship with our neighbors. These events are open to the public and held in partnership with local churches across Missouri. We have a variety of ages and abilities who join us at these events.

What is the Quilt Auction?

Another big component of who we are is the Annual Quilt Auction. We use this event to raise awareness and support for the Church World Service Blanket Program, which helps people rebuild their lives after disasters. For every \$10 we raise, a blanket can be donated to someone who has just experienced a house fire, flood, tornado, or other disasters. More information can be found at festivalofsharing.org/quiltauction.

What are packs and kits?

Below are some of the items we collect at our Sharefests. Our most needed items are paper product packs, personal hygiene kits and family food boxes. In a paper product kit, you will see 12 double rolls of toilet paper, two rolls of paper towels and two boxes of facial tissues. Its estimated value is \$16. Some of the items are used with particular groups. Backpacks of Love and youth personal care kits are for children and youth in foster care, seeds are sent to community gardens, eyeglasses go to the Merida foundation and three kits are sent to Church World Service (CWS), a larger disaster relief organization.



What is Sharefest's history?

In 1974 it began as a call-to-action to address hunger and poverty for United Methodists in Missouri. The event was held at Trowbridge Arena on the University of Missouri-Columbia's campus and it was a big day filled with live animals, clothing drives and other kit donations. In one of those early years, the convocation invited Minnie Pearl to be a guest speaker. She was an active United Methodist Woman and shared her story about faith and entertainment.

A few years later it became ecumenical and other denominations joined in the sharing. It moved to the Sedalia Fairgrounds and was held on the third Saturday in October because of its proximity to World Food Day. There were many group activities, including the packing of rice and beans, worship and the Quilt Auction. Youth would come on Friday night for an overnight experience of worship and fellowship.

In more recent years, there began discussion on how to make the resources from the Festival more accessible and affordable for agencies across the state. This is when the idea of the Sharefest came along. The first two were held in 2016 in the NW Region in Cameron and the St. Louis Region in Ferguson. In 2018, we fully moved to the Sharefest model and have seven events across Missouri in Cameron, St. Louis, Kansas City, Macon, Tipton, Republic, and Dexter.

Who are the agencies?

The agencies we partner with vary in who they are and who they support. They are sometimes food pantries, foster and adoption programs, pregnancy resources centers, community action centers, or refugee services. To be approved with us, they must be supported by other sources in their local communities. When applying, they provide us a list of financial information and governing board members. We also learn about the types of educational classes they offer, such as cooking demonstrations or money management classes. In 2019 we served 113 agencies across the seven Sharefests, those agencies in turn worked with over 60,000 clients each month.

How can I participate?

There are many ways to use your time or talents!

- **Pray for our volunteers, agencies and resources.**
- **Visit our warehouse and work on a project.**
- **Take a booklet and collect different items to assemble kits.**
- **Support a Sharefest by coming to volunteer, help plan the day's events, or share information in your community.**
- **We accept monetary donations which can be designated for certain kits or projects. If you have a special calling towards education and want funds to be used to assemble reading and writing kits, we can make that happen.**
- **Join our Coordinating Committee. This is our governing board who helps provide vision and help make decisions for our overall goals.**

Questions? Contact Sidney Everhart at festival@socket.net or 573-474-3332.



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