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*'Unless the LORD builds the house,
in vain do the builders labor...'*
—Psalm 127, 1

February 25, 2018
Second Sunday of Lent

Dear Friends of Unity Acres,

During the spring of 2007 a group of friends and supporters met in the basement of Saint Vincent's School in Syracuse to begin planning certain very necessary repairs and improvements to the buildings and grounds at Unity Acres.

We also wondered, were these old buildings still structurally sound, safe and serviceable?

After all, Unity Acres had then been occupying this site and these buildings for almost 40 years. (Now we're approaching 50 years!)

In the months and years that followed much has been accomplished. We've written about completed physical plant improvements from time to time in our newsletters, but as we are beginning to think about upcoming needs and projects, I'd like to give some attention to what's been completed already through the labor of our residents and staff, and the generosity of our donors. So in the months which follow, we'll be including a 'Projects Narrative & Summary' as part of the regular newsletters; we'll also be adding a 'Projects' tab to Unity Acres website.

But before turning to this 'Projects Narrative,' I'd like to consider once again the nature of what it is we are trying to build. The Psalm quoted above ... *unless the LORD builds the house...* captures well our motivation and intent. Commentators point out that '*bayit*' in Hebrew has a double meaning: house as a built structure; and house as home or family. 'House' is at once a structure to provide for people's physical security and comforts, but also a place of belonging.

Walls and roofs and flooring, furnaces and electricity and a safe source of drinking water, furnishings and kitchen equipment and plumbing that works are a few of the elements that constitute a house as a built structure, a dwelling place.

House as *physical* structure provides for protection from the elements, and for the needs of the body. The house as home is a *moral* structure where members of the family or community meet, share time together, prepare meals, eat and sleep, experience solidarity, and feel safe from the dangers of a 'treacherous and indescribable' world.

We hope and trust that our efforts past and future honor both aspects of '*bayit*' – house and home.

Steve Dickhout

Prayer: Lent

O Lord, I love the habitation of your house
and the place where your glory dwells.

(Psalm 26, 8)

Almighty God, who dwells not in temples
made with hands, you desire that your
children worship you in places set apart
for your honor. Look mercifully upon all
who gather in your name this day that it
may be hallowed. Speak to your people, O
Spirit, through your called servants, that
our hearts may be stirred to love you
above all else, and our neighbors as
ourselves; through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom with the Father and the Holy
Spirit, be all honor and glory, world
without end. Amen.

From : *Draw me unto Thee*, Brian Thomas