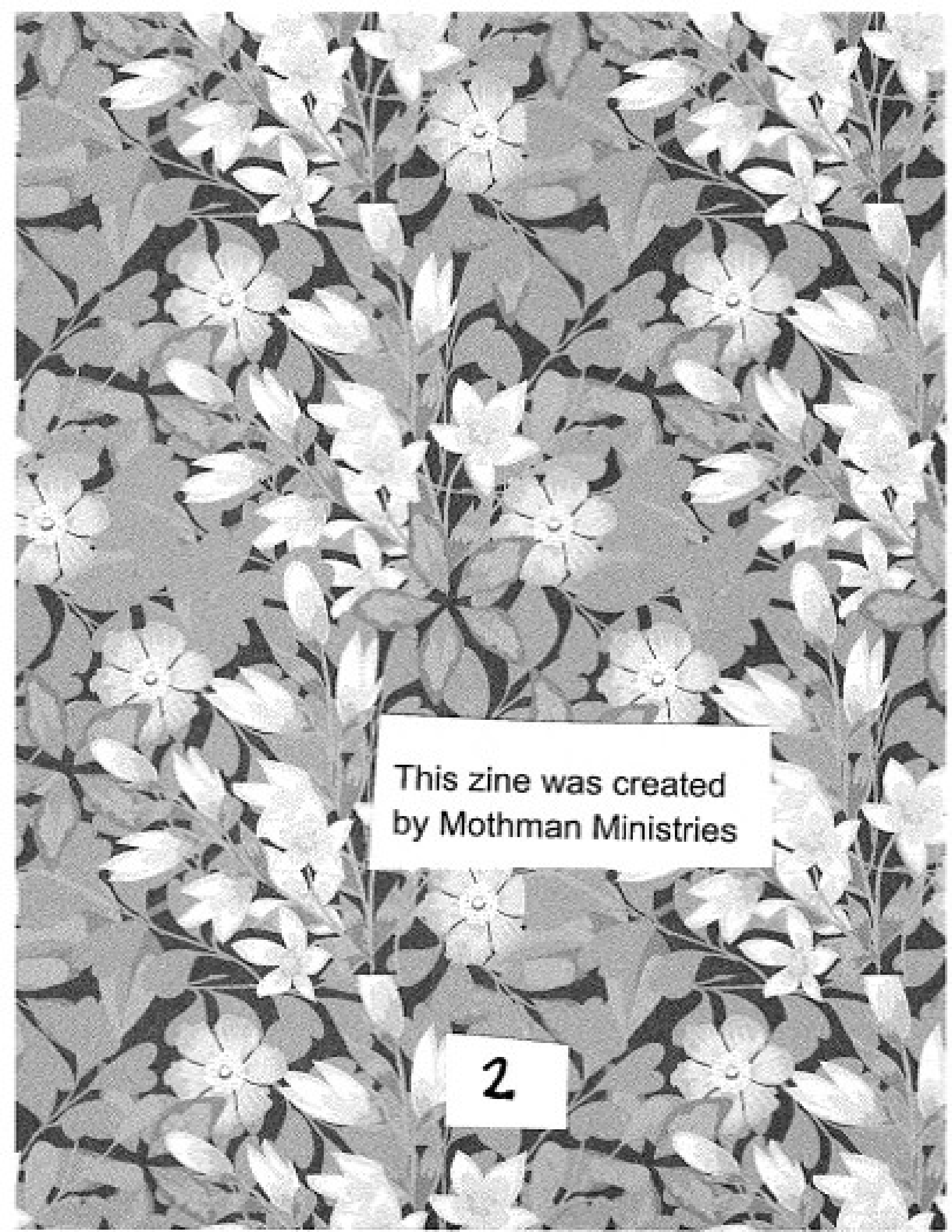


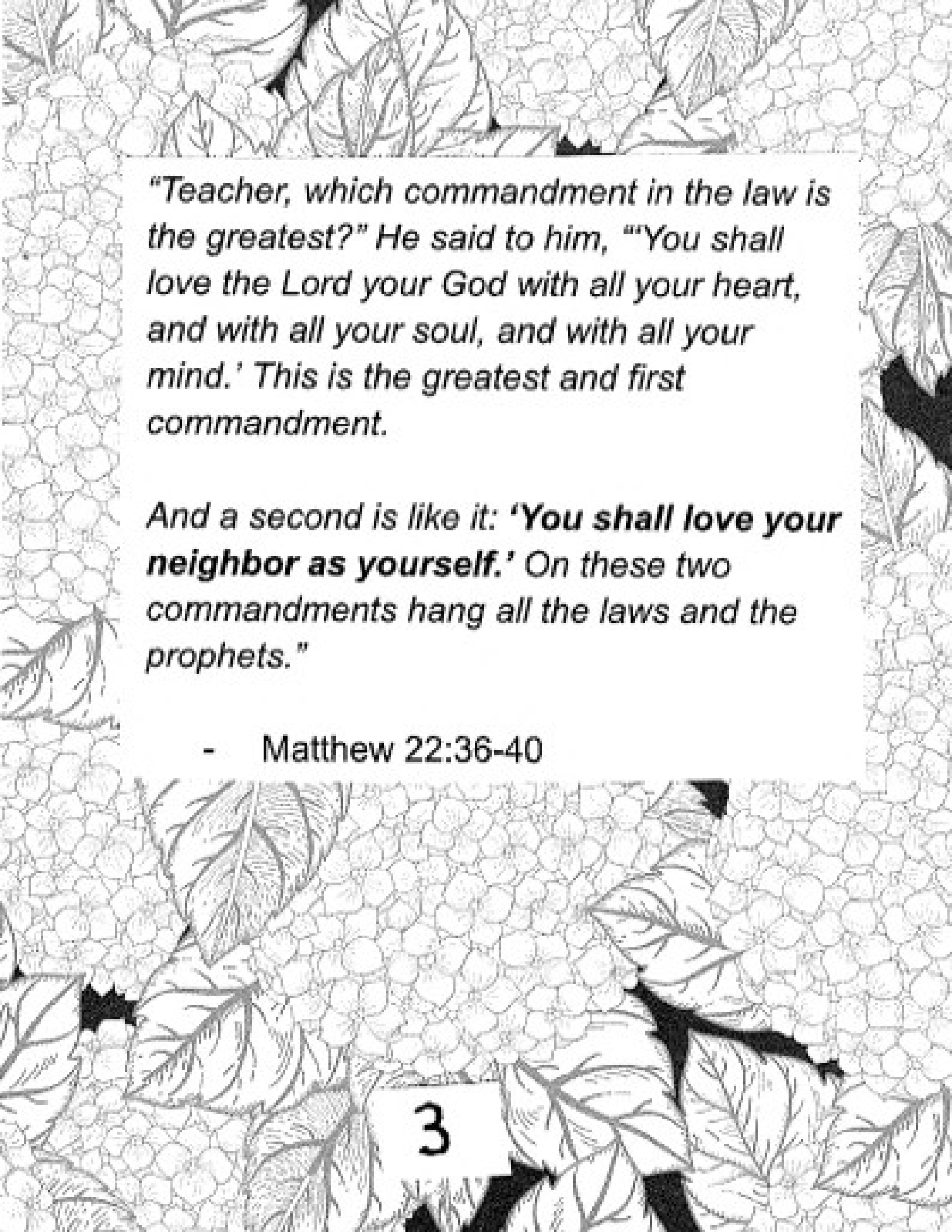
**Love Thy Neighbor:
Practical Ways
to Build
Community**





This zine was created
by Mothman Ministries

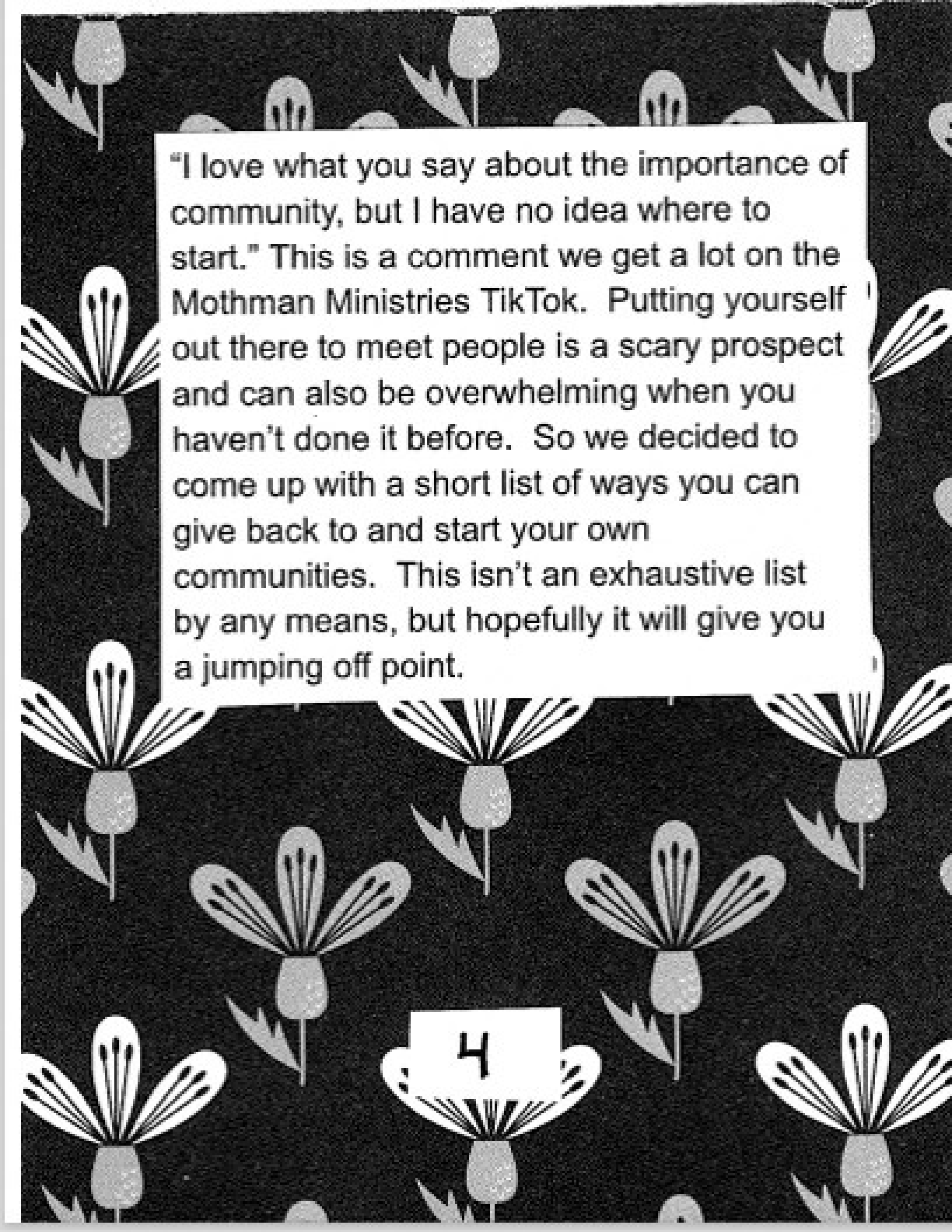
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The page features a decorative border of various leaves and a background with a repeating circular pattern. The text is centered in a white rectangular area.

“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment.

And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the laws and the prophets.”

- Matthew 22:36-40

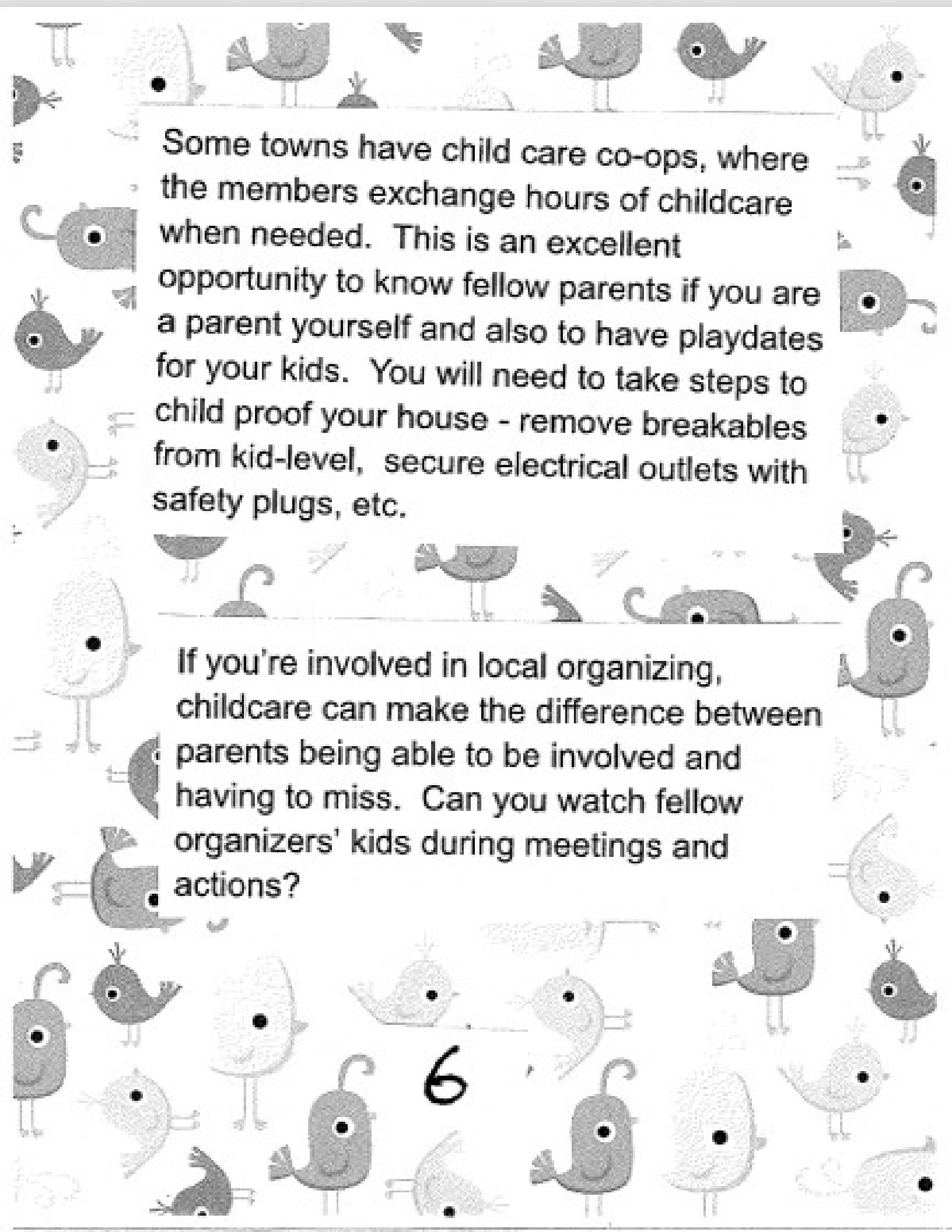


"I love what you say about the importance of community, but I have no idea where to start." This is a comment we get a lot on the Mothman Ministries TikTok. Putting yourself out there to meet people is a scary prospect and can also be overwhelming when you haven't done it before. So we decided to come up with a short list of ways you can give back to and start your own communities. This isn't an exhaustive list by any means, but hopefully it will give you a jumping off point.



Care for Your Neighborhood Children

Are you someone with the gift of child care? Not everyone is cut out for taking care of kids, and if this is your gift in life, this is a wonderful way to help out your neighbors. It will take getting to know the folks in your neighborhood - for safety reasons, most folks won't trust their kids with strangers. But once you get to know them, you will be a huge help to your neighbors, especially those who have two working parents or single parents.



Some towns have child care co-ops, where the members exchange hours of childcare when needed. This is an excellent opportunity to know fellow parents if you are a parent yourself and also to have playdates for your kids. You will need to take steps to child proof your house - remove breakables from kid-level, secure electrical outlets with safety plugs, etc.

If you're involved in local organizing, childcare can make the difference between parents being able to be involved and having to miss. Can you watch fellow organizers' kids during meetings and actions?

Throw a BBQ for Your Neighbors

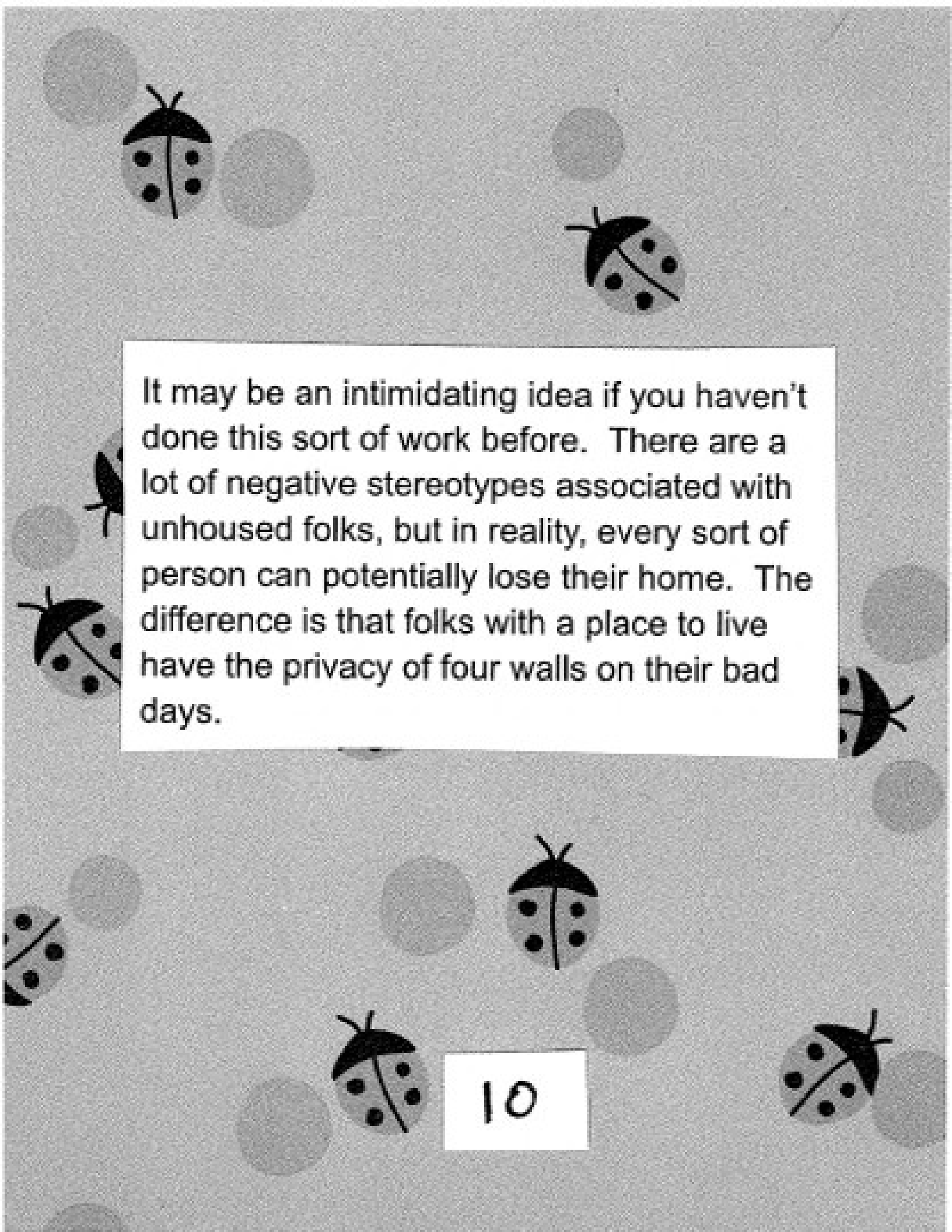
Are you new to the neighborhood, or don't know your immediate neighbors? Making food and having a social event is a great way to get to know them. Eating food with others may be one of the oldest forms of community building. Talk to your neighbors or make paper invites. It may be helpful to have a space online where others can list what they'd like to bring. Warmer weather can mean an outdoor BBQ, or colder weather could be a potluck.

On a smaller scale, you can make soup for your next door neighbor if they're sick, or a casserole if they've just had a baby. It's always a good idea to ask about food allergies and preferences.

Food is also a great way to help other folks when you can't directly be involved with something you support. For example, striking laborers can always use a couple of pizzas. Protesting is hard, dangerous work, and it's always nice to come home to some tacos afterward. Your local touring music group probably doesn't make more than a tank of gas when playing, and a pot of chili can go a long way.

Make Sack Lunches for Unhoused Neighbors

A lot of naysayers and NIMBYs act like this is not the case, but the unhoused folks in your town are also your neighbors. At Mothman Ministries, we do a monthly sack lunch giveaway. While ours are funded by generous community members and online parishioners, simple sack lunches can be assembled for not much money. If you can get four of your friends to participate and donate \$10 each, you can make several dozen sack lunches.

The background of the page is a light gray color with a repeating pattern of black ladybugs and light gray circles. The ladybugs are stylized with three spots on their backs and a vertical line down the center. The circles are of varying shades of gray and are scattered across the page.

It may be an intimidating idea if you haven't done this sort of work before. There are a lot of negative stereotypes associated with unhoused folks, but in reality, every sort of person can potentially lose their home. The difference is that folks with a place to live have the privacy of four walls on their bad days.

Make Art and Music for Your Neighbors

Oftentimes folks say things like “the only thing I’m good at is art, and I don’t think that’s useful.” Which is incredibly not true! Art is vital to society and makes life worth living. Can you make a zine of helpful information to distribute to your community (kinda like this one...)? There are tutorials online. Look up “8 page mini zine” for an easy and versatile template.

What about face painting or a kids’ booth for a local festival? Or leading others in making something? Many groups, such as after school programs, retirement homes, Scouts and hospitals, need folks to come in and do arts and crafts or lead art workshops.

The same can be said for music. You could play music for hospitals, homeless shelters, and retirement homes. You can teach free lessons of an instrument at a community center. Or even busking at a busy spot can be mutually beneficial and lead to getting to know people.

Arts and music can be a great way to get to know folks from all walks of life, but also a great way to get to know folks who have similar beliefs. If you are a person of faith, your local faith group is probably just itching to have someone play music during a service. If you are agnostic or atheist, your local group of similarly-minded folks could probably use a graphic designer for fliers and social media.

Fix Your Neighbor's Car/Bike

If you are blessed with the gift of mechanical aptness, you can make a huge impact on your community. Women and LGBTQ+ folks often have a bad experience at garages, not to mention the financial strain car problems can put on a person. Fixing minor car issues and changing oil and fluids is a fantastic way to meet other folks similar to you while helping them.

Another version of this: one police tactic is to pull over Black folks and people of color with tail light issues to find other alleged charges. Tail lights can be fairly easy to fix with a Youtube search, and a Tail Light Clinic where you and like minded folks fix tail lights can literally save lives. The cost of a variety of tail lights can be offset by other fundraisers, either online or in person.

If cars aren't your thing, bike clinics and bike repair co-ops help as well. A variety of folks from all income levels ride bikes, but bikes are especially vital to low income and unhoused neighbors. Many bike repairs only require bike repair tools, and some community spaces have these for free. Add a tire patch kit in there, and you've covered most issues a bike commuter would run into.

Fix Your Neighbor's Home

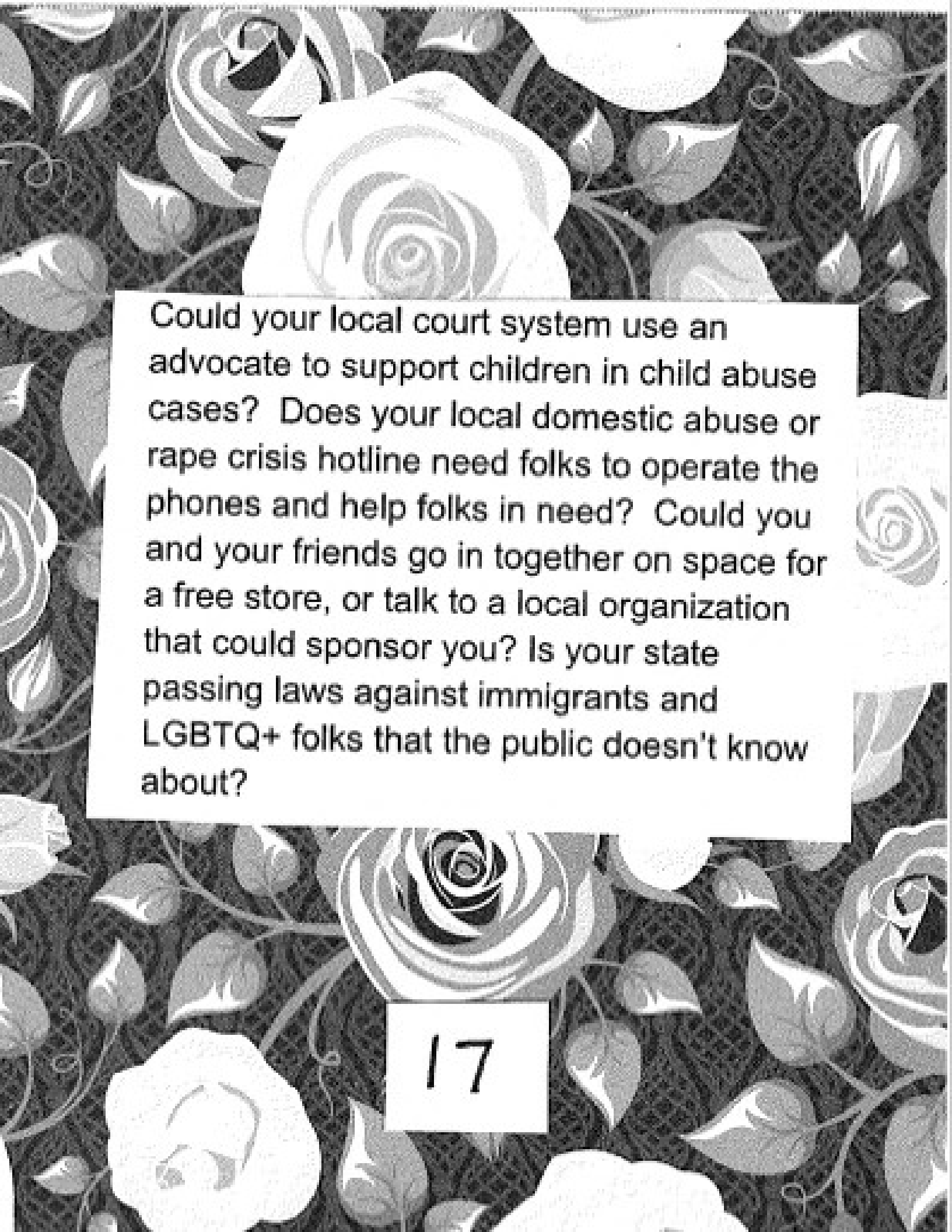
Are you inspired by Mercury Stardust? Have you learned how to patch drywall or unclog a toilet? Do you love putting on some overalls and painting a room? If so, you can be a huge asset to your low income and elderly neighbors, as well as your neighbors in student housing!

Huntington, for example, has an issue with absentee landlords who won't fix rental properties. Learning some home improvement skills on Youtube can go a long way to help people. Patching a piece of drywall could mean the difference between a student getting their damage deposit back or not.



Advocate for Your Neighbor

Many folks would love to help their neighbors but are afraid to talk to strangers. If this ISN'T you, there are a lot of ways you can help. Could your neighborhood or building need a tenants union to help renters speak up against their landlords?

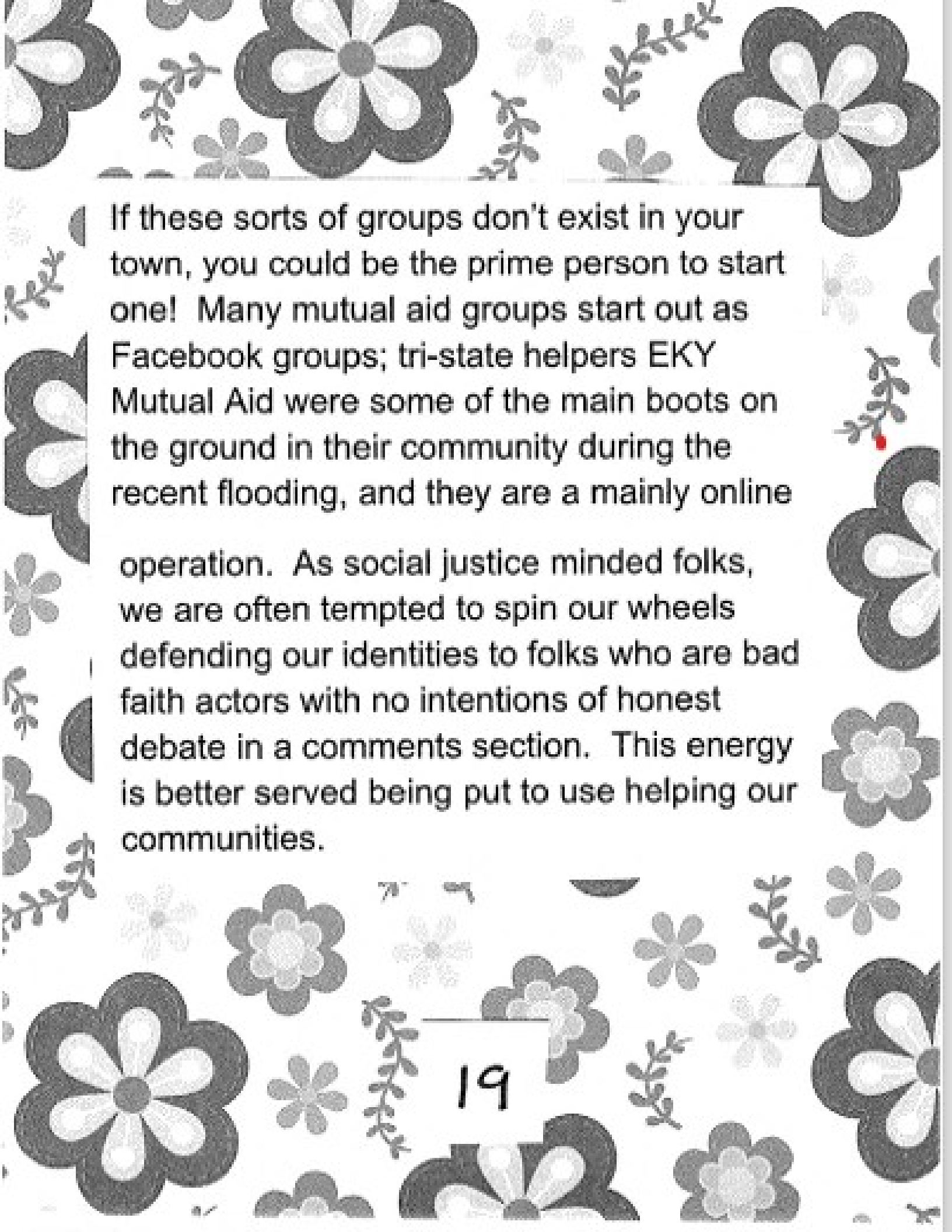


Could your local court system use an advocate to support children in child abuse cases? Does your local domestic abuse or rape crisis hotline need folks to operate the phones and help folks in need? Could you and your friends go in together on space for a free store, or talk to a local organization that could sponsor you? Is your state passing laws against immigrants and LGBTQ+ folks that the public doesn't know about?

The page is framed by a decorative border of stylized flowers and leaves in various shades of gray. The flowers are of different sizes and designs, some with multiple petals and some with a central dot. The leaves are simple, pointed shapes on thin stems.

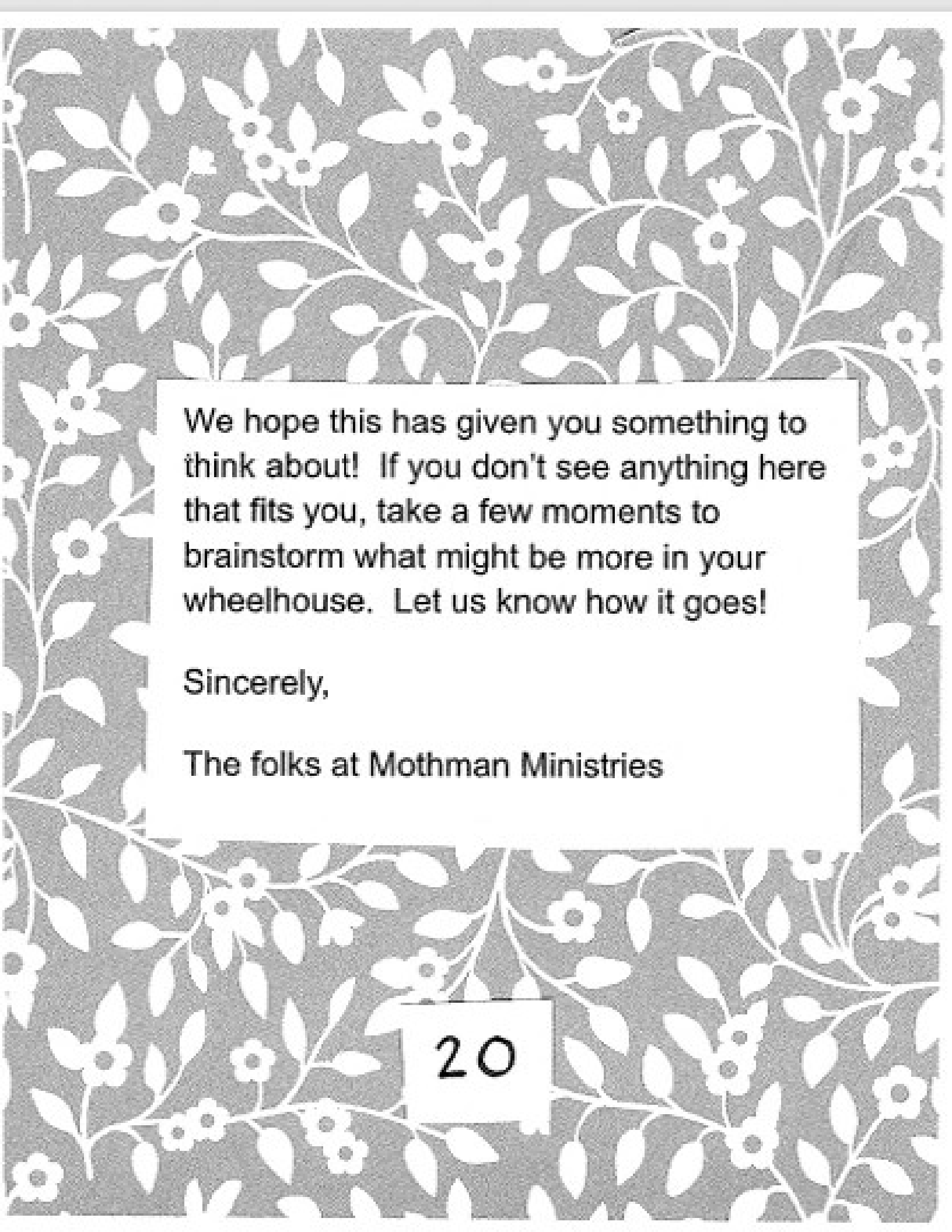
Manage Your Neighbor's Social Media

Where you live, there are probably organizations already doing work that you are interested in. And if your town is like Huntington, some of those organizations are understaffed and have social media accounts where volunteers who don't understand the nuances and algorithms are doing their best. If you're a wiz at TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and beyond, you're probably very much needed in a local group.



If these sorts of groups don't exist in your town, you could be the prime person to start one! Many mutual aid groups start out as Facebook groups; tri-state helpers EKY Mutual Aid were some of the main boots on the ground in their community during the recent flooding, and they are a mainly online

operation. As social justice minded folks, we are often tempted to spin our wheels defending our identities to folks who are bad faith actors with no intentions of honest debate in a comments section. This energy is better served being put to use helping our communities.



We hope this has given you something to think about! If you don't see anything here that fits you, take a few moments to brainstorm what might be more in your wheelhouse. Let us know how it goes!

Sincerely,

The folks at Mothman Ministries



NOTES



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We're on TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram!

**Find us online at
[HolyMothman.com](https://www.HolyMothman.com)**