

Mission Team News

Due to the COVID pandemic, 2020 became a very different year for everyone, Peace Presbyterian's Mission initiatives included. After considering the state of affairs, we decided to focus our efforts on local mission, in particular on programs dealing with hunger and social justice. In the past, we have mixed local support with international initiatives, we recognized pretty quickly that activities like meal packaging for Rise Against Hunger were not going to happen, nor would exchange of teens through the Ulster Project.

We did feel very fortunate that the Session created a budget for 2020 that dedicated \$10,000 to Mission Activities. Significant monetary contributions in 2020 went to the Crossroads Community Center, the Food Bank of Eastern North Carolina, Joy Soup Kitchen and the Family Violence Center. We also bought rice from Rise Against Hunger, which was donated to the Food Bank. As the year wore on, we became concerned with folks across the country who were impacted by disasters (California Wildfires, Gulf of Mexico Hurricanes, mid-west tornadoes), and to help people in those areas, we made a large contribution to the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance program.

As we were distributing money to these worthy causes, we felt the need to involve our



congregation in mission activities, in spite of the confinement imposed on us due to COVID. Church members have generously contributed food items for the Food Bank and several Rubbermaid storage containers full of food have been taken to the Food Bank each week since the middle of spring. Another initiative to help a local charitable organization is involvement with The Village, which gives women/moms recovering from drug addiction the

opportunity to reintegrate into the community. As in years past, we have delivered Valentines to residents in February, and Christmas gifts donated through the Angel Tree. Although these are small efforts, they are very much appreciated by the moms and kids who reside there. We hope that these efforts provide our members an opportunity to feel directly involved with people in the Greenville community who are less fortunate than we.



In 2021, we will continue with our program of donations to local support groups, continuing to focus on hunger. Donations this year will be enhanced by a generous donation from one of our members, specifically to support these hunger-related activities. At the same time, your mission team is considering several hands-on efforts that we might implement in 2021 or 2022. We will continue to receive food donations that we will offer to the Food Bank and we encourage everyone to generously contribute to this effort. We will also continue to provide a dinner once a month for residents at the Community Shelter. This is a program that Peace has

carried out for around 30 years. Each month, a congregation family takes responsibility for organizing a meal, something that involves usually creating a dinner menu and asking others to join in the effort through food preparation or by joining the group on Friday evening in serving the meal. Many Peace congregants have been involved in these meals. We encourage anyone who wishes to be involved to contact mission committee members. Organization responsibilities have been claimed for most months in 2021, but we always welcome new participants. In addition, we are exploring two other food-related activities: producing food in a community garden and harvesting food stuffs left over after the harvest, often referred to as gleaning. Gleaning may actually extend to collecting leftover food from local restaurants to be redistributed to those in need. Finally, we have been in touch with Rise Against Hunger organizers to discuss ways in which we might support their activities.



Later this year look for two opportunities to learn more about several of these initiatives: First, Reverend Debbie is working on a Bible study that will focus on the issue of hunger. Second, we also would like to initiate a video series that could be titled “Sanctuary Conversations” in which we would host representatives of programs we support (e.g. Food Bank; Community Shelter; The Village) to join in a short chat to describe their activities and to explain how our efforts support theirs.

Your Mission Team members are Paul and Pam Gares, Carol Poston, David Collier, Anna Bridgeman, Christine Brizendine, Chris Dennis, Janet Johnson and Ruth Worsley. We would welcome more members and especially ideas for Mission activities. Contact any of these members if you wish to be more active in existing programs, or by sharing ideas for other activities or for ways of spending our monies.