



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
CONCORD

First Pres Provides Assistance to Community Partners

Through partnerships with organizations in our community, First Presbyterian Church Concord has traditionally provided gifts included in our annual budget and the Presbyterian Women's annual budget which support nonprofits, schools, and others who assist the underserved in our community and abroad. In 2020, we **not only continued our participation with these partners, we added additional assistance from our discretionary budget and appeals to our church family** to help those suffering because of the pandemic. Here's how we shared our time and our gifts of financial support with others.

Rise Against Hunger Event Packs 15,000 Meals, \$5,000 Donated

An excited group of Presbyterians gathered in Davis Hall on February 9 to continue our tradition of packing meals for those in need around the world.

We packed 15,000 meals and donated \$5,000 from the Deacon's Discretionary Fund. The following update was received in April from Rise Against Hunger.



"We are delighted to announce that the meals from your Rise Against Hunger Experience on 2/9/2020 have been shipped in a container totaling 285,120 meals from our Charlotte warehouse. The

meals will be received by our in-country partner ORPHANetwork in Nicaragua. We are sincerely grateful for your dedication and for sharing our vision of a world without hunger."

Deacon Discretionary Gifts for Covid Crisis Total \$4,750

In June, Deacons approved these additional discretionary funds because of the Covid crisis: **\$750 to supplement the Coltrane Webb Backpack program** with Food Lion gift cards, **\$3,000 to help Meals on Wheels** create additional shelf stable meals, and **\$1,000 to Cooperative Christian Ministry** for the food pantry.

Angel Tree Program Serves More Children

The 2020 Angel Tree Program changed quite a bit this year. In past years, in partnership with The Angel Tree Fellowship Ministry, church members chose from a Christmas Angel Tree in the narthex a tag with the name of a child whose parent is incarcerated in Cabarrus County. Based on contact with the family by Deacon "liaisons," gifts were suggested for each child and the church member would then buy the suggested gift which was given to the child in the name of the incarcerated parent and delivered to the family by the liaison. **Each child received one "need gift" such as clothing or a coat and one "want gift" as a toy.** We usually served 60 families in this manner.

This year due to Covid, this process became too risky from a personal contact perspective. As a result, a Virtual Angel Tree was created. The Angel Tree network sent our church a link specific to our congregation. Those choosing to participate paid \$22 to sponsor a child. The child received a Christmas package on behalf of their incarcerated loved one which included a gift card to Walmart based on the selected sponsorship level, the prisoner parent's message, a Gospel presentation, and an opportunity to quest a free Adventure Bible. These details were in the Banner. By clicking the link, church members could give to as many children as they chose, and provide credit card info online. Those who did not use the online method dropped checks at the church. That was it. **We started with 60 children, but ended up serving more than 70 children!**

Anne Morrison and Linda Barnett who coordinated this project noted, "We were excited more children were served this year. While many sponsors liked the convenience of this process during a very busy time of the year, others missed the personal interaction in terms of shopping for the child and, from the Diaconate, touching base with the family. **Again, this pandemic created pros and cons, but we still were able to participate in this project and touched the lives of 70 families."**

Deacons Provide \$1,500 for Irvin student backpacks



Irvin Elementary School hoped to purchase 650 backpacks for the students' laptop computers used for virtual learning. **The Diaconate provided \$1,500 from their discretionary fund to purchase 86 new backpacks** in August 2020.

Habitat Matching Campaign Raises \$15,900

Due to the 2020 pandemic, **volunteers could not gather to build a Habitat home as has been our tradition.** And because Habitat, like many nonprofits, could not seek gifts through their normally scheduled special events, **they had a projected loss of \$45,000 in June.** The Habitat Restore was closed for 10 weeks **creating another \$140,000 deficit.**



Determined to assist Habitat in this time of financial crisis, **our Diaconate and Session with First Pres Habitat coordinator Ron Barus as the leader launched a \$5,000 matching gift campaign** using funds from the Session's discretionary fund. **The campaign was a huge success! Church members contributed \$10,900, so a**

check for \$15,900 was presented to Habitat in August 2020.

CROP Hunger Walk Raises \$800

The CROP Hunger Walk annually supports the global mission of Church World Service, a faith-based organization transforming communities around the globe through just and sustainable responses to hunger, poverty, displacement and disaster. **Twenty five percent of the funds raised are returned to the host community which go to Cooperative Christian Ministry in our community.**

The logistics and actual walk changed dramatically in 2020 to support hunger which was even more critical due to the Covid pandemic. **Registration and fundraising took place entirely online and the event became a Virtual CROP Hunger Walk.** The large group gathering that usually kicked off the walk was eliminated. **Participants walked in their own neighborhoods, greenway trails or local parks** either solo, with their families or small groups while social distancing. **Edy Johnston and Tripp Carpenter, Diaconate coordinators were thrilled that we raised \$800 exceeding the \$500 goal!**

Operation Sandwiches for Opportunity House



In the fall, the Deacons launched a new ministry called **Operation Sandwich**. On designated Fridays, volunteers create bagged lunches which included a delicious sandwich, chips, granola bar, fruit, dessert and water for delivery to Opportunity House, a day shelter for our homeless neighbors located on Corban Avenue. When guests leave Opportunity House on Friday after-

noon, they receive a bagged lunch to help nourish them until the shelter reopens Monday morning. Because there are few other shelters and meals available over the weekend, the Deacons were

delighted to help Opportunity House fill this gap. Church volunteers have joyfully created as many as 120 bagged lunches at a time. Many more Opportunity Sandwich Fridays will be organized in 2021!

First Pres, Afton Rotary & Channel 9 Partnership

First Presbyterian Church has worked in partnership with **Concord Afton-Sunset Rotary Club** and **WSOC-TV Channel 9** to collect school supplies for students and teachers in our area. In the past, barrels marked with #9 School Tools served as a drop-off site at our church. This past year, however, because of Covid restrictions, the Rotary Club hosted a drive-through collection at the church. With the generosity of church members and others in the community, #9 School Tools was again a success!



Presbyterian Women's 2020 Dunford Fund Grants

The Dunford Fund was left in the care of the Presbyterian Women of our church in 1980 by Nancy Ridenour Dunford in honor of her mother, Mrs. Johnsie Sims Ridenhour, one of our faithful members. Income from the fund is "to be used for yearly projects of the women of the church." A grant process was established by the Presbyterian Women to distribute the annual income, and grants are made quarterly through an application process.

During 2020, the Presbyterian Women were able to grant requests for \$4,050 which include the Ridenhour Scholarship, grants for internal projects of the Presbyterian Women and our congregation, and mini-grants to various external organizations and individuals doing work in our community. The grants to CVAN and Cooperative Christian Ministry were in response to needs created by the pandemic. The external mini-grants made up the large majority of Dunford awards.

Grants made in 2020 were:

Academic Learning Center - tutors for low income children

Concord Bible Association - stipends to pay teacher salary at Concord High School

Molly Bynum / Girl Scout Troop 334 - printing of nutrition-related children's coloring books distributed by Cabarrus Health Alliance, Molly's Girl Scout Gold Award project

Cooperative Christian Ministry - pandemic response

Salvation Army Women's Auxiliary - supplies for annual Christmas stockings

Family Support Network - workbooks for a parenting class online for parents of children with disabilities

Cabarrus County student - portion of college tuition at Alabama State University

William Black Lodge - food and housing for a retreat for pastors of smaller churches

Matthew Hunt / Rose of Thanks - mailing expenses for care packages collected by area churches and sent to deployed military women

CVAN - Halo LED air purifiers

Boys & Girls Club of Cabarrus County - after school care expenses for 2 children

Ridenhour Scholarship - scholarship assistance for a seminary student chosen by the Presbytery

Jamie Valvano, motivational speaker for PW Spiritual Nurture Luncheon - to supplement the speaker fee for event offered to entire congregation and community

Jacquie Yost and Jeff Price - "token of appreciation" was made in gratitude to the musicians who adapted to these hard times and yet uplifted us in so many ways

Former Bayonnais student Wisly Chery - supplement to Civil Engineering college education in Haiti

Note: For more information about this program, contact Francey Brown, Presbyterian Women treasurer.

Church Family Provides Additional PW Project Support

In June, a special thank you was offered to the congregation for their additional financial support of Presbyterian Women's projects that were affected by the pandemic at this point in 2020. Because the Covid crisis dramatically affected the structure of the Backpack Program (see related article page 8), church members quickly responded with donations of over \$4,000 to help buy Food Lion Alcohol Free Gift Cards for the families we were serving at Coltrane Webb Elementary School.

Also, Jayne Maurer, our retiring church hostess, with the help of Cathy West spent countless hours writing a cookbook to also benefit the Backpack Program. Our church family provided \$600 in donations in exchange for copies of Jayne's Recipes.

When Woody Collins at Congo Helping Hands, our Todd & Betsy Hobbie Scholarship liaison to the Congo nursing program we support, mentioned they were raising money for handwashing buckets and masks for the schools' reopening in the Congo, church members stepped up and sent donations totaling \$900. René Prager, PW Moderator remarked, "Once again we see the generous spirit of the members of First Presbyterian Church and a reminder that God is working through us in these difficult days when we are apart."