

## Mission and Outreach Activities

### 2016 Overview

The Missions Board met six times in 2016, carrying out programs both local and global in scope, while participating in various DCC fund-raising activities in a supportive role.

In January, we began to explore the possibility of engaging in the UCC Open and Affirming educational process. Three of our church members had attended a Conference-sponsored ONA informational workshop day in the fall of 2015, and we invited them to share their learning experience with us. This conversation led us to plan a wider discussion with the congregation for the spring.

In April, a Food for Thought discussion about the Open and Affirming Process was led by Pastor Cindy on behalf of Missions. Carol-Ann Jane hosted the event where attendees answered questions on the UCC ONA Congregational Assessment Survey. We purchased copies of *What the Bible Really Says About Homosexuality* by Daniel Helminiak, Ph.D. and made them available to the discussion participants and to the wider congregation.

Our commitment to the interests of our community presented an opportunity to support the effort of the Five Rivers Conservation Trust to conserve 237 acres of the Stone Farm, farmlands of our beloved church member Jim Stone and his wife, Judy. Missions assisted the Stone Farm Committee in coordinating a highly successful fundraiser with wine tasting, chocolate and appetizers to accompany a public presentation about the project in February.

One of our goals is to engage Dunbarton and area residents around topics relevant to both general public interest and our own faith-based concerns. In April we hosted a talk on Climate Change. UNH Professor Emeritus, Dr. Barry Rock gave a presentation entitled, "Climate Change Here in New Hampshire, the Science and Impact on our New England Landscape." It was a compelling discussion and well-received.

During Arts on the Common in May, we participated with a pie booth. Also in May, during a rainy day Blessing of the Animals service in a crowded vestry, Shelley Westenberg outlined the principles of Heifer International. Participants had the opportunity to donate funds to benefit this worthwhile program.

We conducted Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) education through Mission Moments at the end of last year. Continuing that focus, we presented educational material for two major UCC offerings, One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) and Neighbors in Need. In June we voted to designate our OGHS offerings for Syrian Refugee Humanitarian Relief. Two Mission Moments were shared, one a skit based on the Parable of the Good Samaritan. On OGHS Sunday, we engaged the congregation in a walk around the sanctuary to symbolize solidarity with Syrian refugees. Also in June, we made a donation to Help-Hope-Live in honor of church member Jim Williamson while he awaits a new heart.

The musical group Village Harmony returned to Dunbarton in July. Shelley Westenberg arranged and coordinated housing for the vocalists and staff.

As part of community outreach and to welcome residents into our sanctuary, Missions again organized Halloween preparations. Board members greeted the many visitors, children and adults. Decorations were so complete and authentic that one young couple marveled, "Is this an actual, practicing church?" Curios on the Common was open to greet people and distribute candy, as well.

In November, we offered Mission Moments to explain the Neighbors in Need UCC offering, which we received on the Sunday before Thanksgiving. We welcomed Pastor Chris Owen to our November meeting and look forward to his insights, perspective and advice regarding our mission activities throughout this interim period.

Patty Shearin continued the organization of the Christmas Concert Program, as well as advertising the concert. Shelley Westenberg coordinated food and raffle baskets.

We offer our sincere gratitude to Bill Zeller for his years of service on the Missions Board and agree to relieve him of Mission participation so he may concentrate exclusively on those of Deacon!

## ***ONGOING***

### **Food Pantry**

The church's food pantry continues to be available on an "as needed" basis to Dunbarton residents, and donations of nonperishable food, household/toiletry items and monetary gifts are accepted. The youth in the church and wider Dunbarton community have continued to volunteer their time assisting with our holiday food basket program, packing boxes at Easter and Thanksgiving.

Easter ham dinner baskets were packed and distributed on Tuesday evening, March 22<sup>nd</sup> for 10 Dunbarton families. Thanksgiving baskets were packed and distributed on Sunday afternoon, November 20<sup>th</sup> for 11 Dunbarton families.

2016 Donations to the **Dunbarton Community Assistance Fund** totaled \$3,838.34, which includes gifts from private parties (\$2,475.81), the Blessings Jar (\$243.71) and the Community Assistance Fund Monthly Collection (\$1,118.82).

In December of 2015, the Missions and Deacons Boards and Church Council approved the merger of the Deacons' Fund with the Food Pantry Fund due to redundancy in their use, to become the ***Dunbarton Community Assistance Fund***. It is subsidized by donations collected in the Blessings Jar, a monthly special collection and private donations.

Funds used from the Community Assistance Fund were allocated as follows:

• Fund for Jim Williamson	\$250.00
• Utility Assistance (2 families)	\$500.00
• Dunbarton Scholarship Fund	\$200.00
• Easter Hams	\$60.00
• Thanksgiving Basket Gift Cards	\$300.00
• Career Retraining Assistance	\$160.00
• <u>Holiday Gift Cards (Target)</u>	<u>\$2,350.00</u>

**Total Expenditures** **\$3,820.00**

<b>2015 Beginning Balance:</b>	<b>\$4,664.64</b>
<b>2015 Donations:</b>	<b>\$3,838.34</b>
<b>2015 Expenditures:</b>	<b>\$3,820.00</b>
<b>2015 Year End Balance:</b>	<b>\$4,682.98</b>

### **Roadside Cleanup**

2016 marked our 21<sup>st</sup> year of cleaning up trash from our two mile stretch of Rt. 13 as part of the State of New Hampshire's Adopt-a-Highway Program. Our designated route extends approximately ½ mile

south of the Church and 1 ½ miles north on Rt. 13. Our four required cleanup dates took place on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, June 11<sup>th</sup>, August 20<sup>th</sup> and October 22<sup>nd</sup> with a total of 29 bags of roadside trash collected. This community outreach program enables us to help beautify our town and take care of our environment.

### **Cafe Monte Alto**

We continue to sell coffee from Café Monte Alto as a Missions' Board fundraiser. By purchasing coffee from Café Monte Alto we are supporting *Fair Trade*, a Plymouth, New Hampshire-based business. *Fair Trade* in turn donates 10% of sales to COOPERU, a non-profit that helps coffee farmers who practice environmentally sound farming. We are happy to be able to support them while also providing an income for our Mission's fund. Coffee sales amounted to \$1,280.00. Coffee Purchase Orders totaled \$1,295.00. A large order was placed at the end of the year which has not been sold yet to realize the income, thus we show a net loss of \$15.00 for the year. Any profits are added to the Missions' Account enabling the Missions Board to be self-sufficient with regards to funding their work.

### **Missions Account:**

The Missions Board works from an account that is subsidized by the profits made from the Coffee Program sales at DCC and Curios on the Common. **The starting balance in January 2016 was \$620.00.** Funds were allocated as follows:

• Food Pantry Sign purchased from Advantage Signs, Concord, NH	\$200.00
• Climate Change Program (April 24 <sup>th</sup> ) publicity posters	\$66.75
• O & A Book-Study books provided	\$117.57
• <u>Coffee Sales/Coffee Purchase Orders</u>	<u>-\$15.00</u>
<b>Ending Balance</b>	<b>\$220.68</b>

### **Operation Secret Elf**

Operation Secret Elf is a grass-roots effort to help families in the town of Dunbarton during a financially challenging time of the year. Assistance is given to the families that choose to participate in the form of a gift or gifts for their child or children. The 2016 Operation Secret Elf program helped 12 families, with 27 children receiving gifts. The gift pick up was held at the vestry on Wednesday, December 14<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 – 7:00 p.m., with Pastor Chris handing out the gifts to the parents.

### **Visiting Nurses Association Flu Vaccination Clinic**

The Missions Board worked in collaboration with the Visiting Nurses Association of NH to offer a flu vaccination clinic again this year. The clinic was held on Tuesday, November 8<sup>th</sup> from 9 – 11 a.m. at the vestry.

### **Goals for 2017**

1. To host a community discussion with support from NH Humanities focusing on the Islamic faith and how it is practiced in the United States
2. To continue "Mission Moments" quarterly
3. To continue to maintain our current array of mission outreach efforts in the local community and beyond.

Respectfully submitted,

Shelley Westenberg, Joyce Ray, Missions Co-Chairs  
Anne Zeller, Recording Secretary  
Bill Zeller  
Patty Shearin, Food Pantry Director  
Margaret Watkins, Community Liaison