

Missions Committee Annual Report

2009

As each year passes, the spirit of Mission within our Congregation intensifies. Participation levels are steady, and financial giving to legacy projects has been surprisingly strong, given the economic climate. Perhaps our greatest achievement in 2009 was having a strong community presence leading events like Zero Waste Day and being spotted in our red Mission/Outreach t-shirts doing everything from volunteering at the Food Pantry to walking 20 miles in the Walk for Hunger. It is amazing how much impact a simple t-shirt can make to not only unite a small group but to provide positive press for TCC as well.

This annual report will provide you with a summary of our giving... through service, financial support, in-kind donations, school sponsorship, and education and advocacy.

Service Projects

The Missions Committee continued to use the Project/Program Coordinator model in order to more actively involve church members in mission work.

Below is a list of the MPC roles and their coordinators for the 9/09-6/10 program year:

Mission Project	Coordinator
Mexico Mission Trip Leader	Jean Carr and Karen Geier
LTLC Thursday Night Leader	Jean Metcalf
LTLC Sunday Night Leader	Cathie Seaman
CWS Depot Coordinator	Jean Carr
Psalm 91 Bandana Project (for military personnel)	JoJo Scharmer
Halloween Candy Coordinator	Joanne Kenney
Dorcas' Kitchen Team Captain	Jean Metcalf
Baby Kit Coordinator	Cathie Seaman
LTLC Brownie Baking Coordinators	Carol Sturtevant and Sherry Fulton
Outerwear Drive Coordinator	Suzanne Spezzano
Java Coordinator	Marlene Gasdia-Cochrane
Coffee Hour Coordinator	Laura Holmes
Toiletry Collection Coordinator	Laura and Ben Holmes
Potato Drive Coordinator (Food Pantry)	Stephanie Muse
Food Pantry Liaison	Carol and Bob Sturtevant
Dorcas' Kitchen Delivery Coordinator	Roberta Kane and Louise Gearty
CWS School Kit Coordinator	Marlene Gasdia-Cochrane
Hike for Hope Team Captain	Beth McFadyen
Walk for Hunger Team Captain	Jessica Kenney
Hike for Humanity Team Captain	Steve Trudeau
Giving Tree Coordinator	JoJo Scharmer
Zero Waste Day Coordinator	Beth McFadyen
Missions and Outreach Webmasters	Jessica Kenney and Jim Kenney

Service Projects (continued)

In January and February, we continued our tradition of creating **Baby Baskets** for The Wish Project of Lowell. Under Cathie Seaman's leadership, baby supplies were donated and baby blankets were lovingly made by our members. Cathie then assembled the kits in March. Our very own Pam Bussey and Diana O'Toole work independently on this project throughout the year, and have been responsible for creating well over 100 baskets for Wish. Next year, we will discontinue the Missions project in favor of allowing Pam and Diana to represent TCC with their ministry to The Wish Project.

Serving dinner at the **Lowell Transitional Living Center** continued in 2009 under the leadership of Jean and Noel Metcalf and Cathie and Craig Seaman. TCC serves dinner on the 2nd Sunday and 2nd Thursday of each month, and we bake 150 brownies for the meal on the 2nd Thursday, under the leadership of Sherry Fulton and Carol Sturtevant. We are thankful for donations of brownie ingredients, supplied by the Congregation each month.

The **Dorcas' Kitchen** program serves our members and friends in need of a little TCC TLC. By making homemade meals and storing them in the freezer, they are available at a moment's notice for members who are ill, recovering, experiencing a celebration or a loss, or simply could use a pick-me-up from their church family. Jean Metcalf leads the cooking crew, and Louise Gearty and Roberta Kane coordinate the delivery of the meals.

Under the leadership of Jess Kenney, eleven walkers represented TCC in Project Bread's **Walk for Hunger** on May 3rd. Including a pledge from the Missions Committee for \$275 (\$25/walker), Team TCC raised more than \$750 to fight hunger in Massachusetts.

Since our first year was such a success, the Missions Committee again offered TCC as a **Church World Service Depot** site. During the week of May 4th, local churches and non-profits delivered their kits to TCC through the coordination efforts of Jean Carr. In all, 271 kits were collected, weighing more than 632.5 pounds. Just imagine where those kits are now!

Work on the **Church World Service School Kit** project began in the summer with the sewing of bags by Jean Metcalf and the promotion of the supply needs by the Gasdia-Cochrane family. By October, school supplies had been collected, bags had been assembled, and the kits were dedicated. During the dedication on October 18th, the Missions Committee was pleased to present Jean Metcalf with a Heart in Hand pendant as a gift of thanks for her many, many years of dedication to sewing the CWS bags with love stitched inside each one.

We were pleased to offer our service to the **Tewksbury Community Pantry** on two occasions this year, as they sorted and stacked incoming donations from their two Postal Carrier Food Drives on May 9th and October 24th. Thirteen members volunteered on 5/9 and seven members volunteered on 10/24.

On October 5th, six TCC members participated in the **Hike for Hope**, a 5 mile walk through the streets of Andover, supporting Lazarus House Ministries of Lawrence. The team raised \$725, including a \$250 matching pledge from the Missions Committee.

Service Projects (*continued*)

If the Missions Committee members were asked to pick their most impactful event of the year, they would resoundingly choose **Zero Waste Day**. The ZWD concept was created by Andover's Recycling Committee as an effort to encourage residents to share their gently used items rather than discarding them into the waste stream. To that end, they invited ten local non-profits to come to town one Saturday morning in May with a big truck to collect donations. The result was phenomenal, so we decided to use their model in Tewksbury.

In partnership with the Tewksbury Recycling Committee, TCC coordinated Tewksbury's ZWD on Saturday, May 16th, from 9am-1pm. Through advertising on our TCC website, Facebook, email, posters, and press coverage, more than 400 cars drove through our donation parking lot, held at Tewksbury Memorial High School, and donated their gently used items to one of 11 participating charities, which included:

- Big Brother/Big Sister
- Bikes Not Bombs
- Boston Building Materials and Resource Center
- Community Giving Tree
- Got Books
- Lazarus House
- Mission of Deeds
- MSPCA, Nevins Farm
- Project Home Again
- Saint Vincent de Paul
- The Wish Project

We also offered electronics recycling and earned \$602 for this fee-based service which was managed by the Big Brother/Big Sister Association. In honor of our shared 275th Anniversary with the town of Tewksbury, we decided that we should give these funds back to the community through the purchase of Fourth of July fireworks by the Patriotic Activities Committee.

The Zero Waste Day event had many positive outcomes, but one of the most significant was the team-building opportunity experienced by nearly 50 members of the Congregation who volunteered to serve in some way. We shared a special energy that day as we served our community together, and these words could not be more true: *"The hand that gives, gathers."*

Financial Support

For the past several years, Missions has "pledged" what we consider to be significant funds to 3-4 organizations on a quarterly basis, in addition to modest one-time checks issued to a larger group of non-profits. In 2009, we decided to continue our support of the following organizations which have special ties to TCC:

- **Harvest Hands** (our Mexico Mission trip partner) ~ \$500/quarter = \$2000 annually
- **Tewksbury Community Pantry** ~ \$300/quarter = \$1200 annually
- **UCC, Church's Wider Mission** ~ \$350/quarter = \$1400 annually
- **Protestant Campus Ministries, UMASS, Lowell** ~ \$250/quarter = \$1000 annually

The following organizations received single financial gifts from TCC in 2009:

- Project Bread (Walk for Hunger pledge) ~ \$275
- Lazarus House (Hike for Hope pledge) ~ \$250

- Community Giving Tree ~ \$207

Financial Support (*continued*)

Special Note: Our listing of “single” financial gifts on the previous page is especially small, because the Missions Committee designated \$2000 of our 2009 approved funding to offset TCC’s year end financial deficit. The following organizations typically receive a one-time gift from TCC in the Nov/Dec timeframe: Mission of Deeds, NE Veterans Outreach Center, Solomon Mental Health Center, The Wish Project, United Christian Foundation Campus Ministry, Lowell Transitional Living Center, and the City Mission Society. Although we were thankful for the opportunity to help the Congregation in its time of financial need, we feel that it is appropriate to acknowledge the many gifts that TCC was not able to share in 2009.

Once again, Missions partnered with the Finance Committee to suggest organizations in need of financial support which might benefit from receiving a portion of our Advent and Lenten offerings. To that end, **Place of Promise** received \$1080 in February 2009 (from the December 2008 offering) and the **Community Giving Tree** received \$293 from the Lenten offering. Because of the budget situation, what was once a 50% split for the Advent and Lenten Offerings between TCC and a charity is now a 75%/25% distribution in TCC’s favor. The Missions Committee looks forward to a time when our budget is stable enough to, at the very least, return to the 50% split.

The Missions Committee is also responsible for several worship offerings that are held throughout the year. In February, \$645 was collected for **Blankets+ Sunday**. The traditional Christmas Eve **Veterans of the Cross** collection, benefiting retired clergy, netted \$883.41 at the December 24, 2009 service, and was shared with the UCC in 2010.

In our 275th anniversary year, it seemed only right that we go back to the basics and choose the “heifer” as our **Heifer Campaign** animal for 2009. With a goal of purchasing 4 heifers for \$500 each, we used our traditional methods of fundraising, which included:

- Heifer Mother’s Day Cards, with a free-will offering
- Coin banks distributed to the church school students
- Special offering during worship on Heifer Sunday, May 10th

Paul Manning offered his artistic services and created two wooden cows to place on the front lawn of the church on Heifer Sunday. The mystery remains as to who placed a third wooden cow on the lawn that Heifer Sunday morning. To this day, no one has stepped forward to claim the additional heifer. Through the generosity of our members, \$2000 was indeed raised to purchase four “heifers for Heifer.”

In-Kind Donations

One of our strongest giving programs is supplying new or gently used “in-kind” donations to non-profit organizations both near and far. Because the Congregation is incredibly generous at all times of year, we created a resource called “Used But Usable,” which provides a listing of items of use and the corresponding organizations that accept such items. This resource has been printed in hardcopy form as a handout and is also available on our website.

In-Kind Donations (*continued*)

Below is a complete listing of our 2009 in-kind donation collections:

- Ongoing collection of non-perishable food for the **Tewksbury Community Pantry**
- Ongoing collection of travel-sized toiletries resulting in the creation of more than 250 toiletry kits which were shared with the **Lowell Transitional Living Center**
- Baby supplies (onesies, blankets, lotions, diapers, etc...) collection in January and February resulting in Baby Baskets created for The **Wish Project** of Lowell
- Ongoing collection of empty ink/toner cartridges for **Lowell Campus Ministries**
- School supplies in September to create 29 school kits for **Church World Service**
- Winter outerwear in September to share with clients of The **Wish Project** of Lowell, resulting in the collection of more than 40 coats plus snow pants, boots and lots of hats, mittens and scarves
- Halloween candy collection in November which was sorted and then re-packaged into 250+ treat bags for clients of the **Lowell Transitional Living Center**
- Potato collection for the **Tewksbury Community Pantry**, resulting in 5 lb. bags plus funding to provide 140 Thanksgiving baskets for Tewksbury families in need
- Giving Tree holiday gift project benefitting children living in foster care (through the **Department of Children and Families**, babies (through the **Mass Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children**, families moving into apartments for the first time (through The **Wish Project**) and TCC seniors, with more than 100 gifts provided to 83 children, 7 adults, and 6 elders

Student Sponsorship

In partnership with the DRE and Board of Religious Education, Missions coordinated the Child Sponsorship program, providing direct links to our Sunday School Program. The highlight of the year was the addition of Maria Dagodog from the Philippines, bringing our sponsored student total to five. During 2009, we sponsored the following students:

- Hernan Dario, age 18, Guatemala, Mayan Families, *matched with Jr/Sr High*
- Peterson Tanis, age 16, Haiti, New Missions, *matched with Jr/Sr High*
- Azael, age 13, Mexico, Harvest Hands, *matched with 6th Grade*
- Florinda, age 11, Guatemala, Mayan Families, *matched with 4th/5th Grade*
- Maria, age 8, Phillipines, UCC, *matched with 2nd/3rd Grade*

Missions facilitated the following outreach opportunities to our sponsored students in 2009:

- Care packages for Florinda and Dario, which included school supplies, clothing, undergarments and socks, shoes, toys, and linens in May and October
- Shoe box care package to Peterson, which was created by Jackie Fulton and Jenna Stanley and mailed in October for Christmas delivery

- Christmas gift of a new armoire (closet) for Florinda's family plus two tamale baskets (funded by the Trudeau and Stewart families)
- Christmas gift of a new laptop computer to Dario, which was partially funded by the Senior High Sunday School class

Student Sponsorship (*continued*)

As has been tradition, we use Coffee Hour donations to fund the sponsorship fees and will purchase incidental gift items for the students using our annual Missions budget dollars. The Missions Committee continues to staff the weekly Fellowship/Coffee Hour with a rotation of more than a dozen volunteer servers.

Education and Advocacy

The **Used But Usable** document, which we originally created in 2008, continues to be regularly updated and is now shared with other organizations. The document provides a listing of local non-profits and the types of donations that they accept. By providing this resource, we maintain our role as educators and advocates of non-profit organizations.

We are very pleased with the success of our **Mission Grant** program. Since early 2008, the Missions Committee has awarded a quarterly \$250 grant to a non-profit organization recommended by one of our members. The following grants were issued in 2009:

- Q1 – Twin Cities Girls Academy (in memory of Holly Bussey), *Cathie Seaman*
- Q2 – Global Ministries Widow's Farm Project, *Bob Masters*
- Q3 – Feed My Starving Children, *Karen Geier*
- Q4 – New Wilmington Mission Conference, *Russ Adams*

In addition to announcing the grant recipients in our monthly newsletter, Missions also keeps a running list, including website links, on our Missions and Outreach website. It has been a true pleasure to witness the joy expressed by our members when they learn that their Congregation has offered both a financial gift and a publicity opportunity to the organization that is near and dear to their heart.

Missions and Outreach Website

With dedicated support from our webmasters, Jessica and Jim Kenney, the Missions Committee has maintained and updated the content for the TCC Missions and Outreach website. The purpose of the site is to create a storage place for all forms and documents created by Missions and to keep our congregation (and others) informed about upcoming projects and partnerships with non-profit organizations.

The following content (pages) has been created and is now maintained as part of this effort:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ▪ Missions and Outreach Home Page | ▪ Mission Trips |
| ▪ Service and Outreach Calendar | ▪ Organizations That We Support |

- Zero Waste Day Home Page
- Mission Project Coordinators
- Forms and Documents
- Gifts That Keep On Giving
- Student Sponsorship Program
- Used But Usable
- Volunteer Opportunities

Other 2009 Activities

We are pleased to report that many more red **Mission/Outreach T-Shirts** were distributed in 2009 as members stepped outside of the church to serve others. These high visibility t-shirts not only provide members working together with an added sense of team, but they also offer wonderful publicity for our Congregation. In the Spring, we purchased additional shirts in anticipation of Zero Waste Day in May.

The **Psalm 91 Bandana Project** continued with relatively little activity in 2009. The goal of this project is to provide a camouflage bandana, inscribed with Psalm 91 – also known as the Soldier’s prayer – to the military family and friends of TCC members. With the initial roll-out of this project occurring in 2007, we anticipate that less than a handful of bandanas will be distributed on an annual basis in future years. To date, more than two dozen bandanas have been gifted to our TCC soldiers.

The Missions Committee was proud to support the **Mexico Mission Team** and their 4th trip to Juarez during the week of April 18-25th. In order to provide more connection points to those not able to travel, we helped to facilitate a **Prayer Partner** program, which worked especially well when the team encountered travel difficulties, delaying their arrival in Mexico. Both travelers and their partners back home felt a strong bond as we prayed daily for one another through shared devotionals. We anticipate that the Prayer Partner program will be used again for the October, 2010 Mission Trip.

To encourage participation in Mission trips that might otherwise be unaffordable, Missions created the **Mission Trip Stipend**, available to all members and their children. The stipend offers reimbursement of 10% of the qualified trip’s costs with a cap of \$100. We were delighted that two of TCC’s college students participated in their University’s Alternative Spring Break programs. In March, \$100 was awarded to Eve Manning for her April trip to New Orleans, and in December, \$95 was awarded to Berit Richtsmeier for her March, 2010 trip which was also to New Orleans. Bob Masters received \$66 toward his Ministries and Mission Interpreters Training Program and will soon become certified to speak to Congregations and non-profits as a representative from UCC’s Global Ministries Program.

There’s nothing better than supporting our youth in Mission work, so we were especially thrilled when Steve Trudeau, one of the leaders for the Sr. High Youth Fellowship Group, asked for the Missions Committee’s blessing in supporting the collection of care package items to send to military personnel. The **Soldier Care Package** project was managed entirely by Steve and the SHYG, and resulted in 11 packages sent to our service people.

Summary

Our year began with members Sherry Fulton, Marlene Gasdia-Cochrane, Paul Manning, and Beth McFadyen, and it ended with the addition of Laura Holmes and Joanne Kenney to our team. We finish the calendar year with a feeling of gratitude and the sense that service unto others is the heartbeat of our Congregation.

In God's Love,

Beth McFadyen, *Chairperson, Missions Committee, 2009-2010*