

First Congregational Church of Manchester, Vermont, UCC



This booklet is designed to acquaint the reader with the organizations that the Missions Committee at the First Congregational Church of Manchester, Vermont regularly supports.

The Missions Committee meets on a regular basis to review each of these organizations. Each committee member is responsible for several “portfolios.” Information about their portfolios is gleaned through social media as well as personal contact. This information is updated at each meeting. The decision about the dollar amount to be spent on each of these organizations is based on the church’s annual budget. Special appeals are also considered at the Missions Committee meetings. At times the appeals are requests by these organizations or due to a different need in the local, national, or international community. Some of these organizations have a specific Christian approach and some are human service organizations that benefit the poor, elderly, and disenfranchised. At all times we strive to be the hands and feet of Christ in our world.

There are fifteen portfolios of which ten are local (southwestern Vermont), two are national, and three are international. Occasional additions and/or deletions to these organizations are prayerfully made. Highlights about each of these organizations are shared as “Mission Moments” during church services.

Back Bay Mission Biloxi, Mississippi



Back Bay Mission has served the poor and marginalized of the Mississippi Gulf Coast for more than 90 years. Through the Missions connection with the United Church of Christ, their values and three-tiered approach can provide support to clients while helping them on their journey to self-sufficiency. Their mission is to:

- Strengthen neighborhoods
- Seek justice
- Transform lives

Everything the Mission does is motivated by eight core values: compassion, hospitality, integrity, justice, love, passion, respect and service. In these values, everyone is treated as a precious child of a loving God. Throughout their history, the Mission has founded social service organizations, provided learning experiences for members of the UCC and provided emergency disaster relief. Members of our congregation helped with a building project in Biloxi a number of years ago. We also hosted a group from the Mission who put on a fantastic shrimp boil in our vestry.

Contact: 228-432-0301 or www.thebackbaymission.org



Bennington Area Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity International is a global, nonprofit housing organization operated on Christian principles. They are dedicated to eliminating substandard housing locally and worldwide through constructing, rehabilitating and preserving homes; by advocating for fair and just housing policies; and by providing training and access to resources to help families improve their shelter conditions.

Habitat for Humanity was founded on the conviction that every man, woman and child should have a simple, durable place to live in dignity and safety, and that decent shelter in decent communities should be a matter of conscience and action for all.

The Bennington chapter started in 1999 and helps approximately two to three families each year with a new or renovated home. There is a neighborhood on Jennifer Lane in Manchester that has approximately 23 house sites, many of which now have homes and families living in them.

Contact: 802-367-1000 or www.benningtonareahabitat.com



Bennington County Coalition for the Homeless [BCCH]

The Bennington County Coalition for the Homeless is “dedicated to collaborating, coordinating & implementing services to the homeless in Bennington County & promoting community awareness.” BCCH assists individuals & families in Bennington County facing homelessness by providing emergency shelter, transitional housing, homelessness prevention assistance, case management and follow-up care. Services are provided at a drop-in service center and through operation of an overnight shelter (Good Shepard), emergency housing for families (Thatcher House) and transitional apartments (McCall Street). All three of these facilities are in the city of Bennington. They seek to increase self-sufficiency, secure permanent housing and treat all those they serve with dignity and respect. Each year they serve at least 50 families/400 people.

Contact: 802-442-2424 and www.bcch-vt.org



Bennington County Foster Parent Association

The Bennington County Foster Parent Association was formed in 2015. They meet monthly and are supported by the Department of Children and Family (DCF). They rely on private financial contributions that are used to provide camp scholarships, after-school activities, foster parent recognition, and foster parent recruitment activities. Additionally, contributions help with the rental space at the Masonic Temple in Bennington where they store gently-used clothing. This space is called the “foster care closet.” All of these activities and efforts are aimed at helping foster care children and their caregivers.

Bennington Rutland Opportunity Council [BROC]

Bennington Rutland Opportunity Council works to change conditions that either cause poverty or stand in the way of its elimination. BROC assists low-income Vermonters with basic needs, as well as helping them develop skills and resources for self-sufficiency through employment opportunities. BROC offers voluntary partnerships with families based on equality, respect, and mutual learning. These partnerships build on families' strengths and successes and have as their goal: moving out of poverty and into self-sufficiency.

BROC

BROC has programs in Economic Development (Micro-business development, Individual Savings Plans, Employment and Education Training, and Financial Education); Food and Nutrition (CACFP, Farm to Family, Food Shelf, and Feed the Freezer); Community Outreach (Crisis fuel and utility, housing and homelessness services, and Vermont Health Connect access); and Energy Conservation (Weatherization program, Hoarding program,

and energy audit program- SAVES). Their offices are in Rutland and Bennington.

Contact: 802-447-7515 and www.broc.org

Burr & Burton Academy Music Fund



In 1998 when Rev. Dick Ringenwald retired as FCC's minister, a fund in his name was established. Because of Dick's love of music and Burr and Burton Academy, the interest from that fund is donated to the music department on an annual basis. It benefits those students who demonstrate ability but lack funds for advanced instruction.

Community Food Cupboard [CFC]



“The mission of the Community Food Cupboard is to ensure that everyone in our community has access to nutritious food and resources that will help them to achieve their potential. We do this by forming local partnerships, working to ensure the sustainability of our food system, and advocating to strengthen the social safety net for low-income families.”

Responding to the work of the state's Hunger Task Force, the Community Food Cupboard of Manchester opened officially in June 1990. CFC is a 501(c)3 charitable organization and is sustained by donations of food and funds from individuals, organizations, businesses and foundations.

CFC is overseen by a Board of Directors represented by no more than three community members and least one member from the following congregations:

- The First Baptist Church
- The First Congregational Church
- The Israel Congregation
- St Paul's Catholic Church
- The United Church of Dorset & East Rupert
- Zion Episcopal Church

FCC not only financially supports this organization but also volunteers in the months of March and November on Wednesdays from 2-4pm and on Thursdays from 10-12am and 2-4pm. The food cupboard has an emergency pantry accessible to the public 24/7 and an online 'sign-up and pick up' system for those who can't come at the designated hours. During COVID a new initiative was begun in the State of Vermont entitled Vermont Everyone Eats. Government grants and private funds help pay local restaurants to prepare meals for anyone affected negatively by the pandemic. These meals are also distributed by CFC.

Contact: 802-362-0057 or www.communityfoodcupboard.org



Guatemala Mission/Team 4:18

Team 4:18 (named after the Bible passage in Luke, Chapter 4, verse 18) travels annually for one week in March to San Lucas, Guatemala. Several medical personnel from

Bennington County and members of local churches who have been recruited by Jennifer DiMauro (a former member of FCC who has moved back to New Jersey) partner with Promised Land Ministries. They are a local ministry that has been serving the people in and around San Lucas for over 30 years. The 4:18 team provides a medical clinic for 3 days and then builds a house for a family in need. They also provide Bible study and activities for the children as well as a sewing ministry to the women in the family that will receive the new home. The cost to build a 2 bedroom house is \$2500 and the cost of medicines we bring are usually between \$500-\$750.

Contact: 609-203-1293 (Jen DiMauro)
or Facebook: Promised Land Ministries
or www.global-action.com



Kenya Drylands Education Fund (KDEF)

KDEF offers educational opportunities to students from Marsabit and Samburu Counties, Kenya. Their mission is to raise awareness of women's health issues, and to promote gender equality, thereby increasing the odds of women and men acting together to make important contributions to the vitality of northern Kenya.

FCC contributes tuition for one high school student. A local woman, Sarah Hadden, co-founded this organization with a local Kenyan leader, Ahmed Kura, in 2010 and KDEF received its 501(c)3 designation in 2013.

Contact: US Office 802-379-0962 (Sarah Hadden)
or www.kdef.org



Meals on Wheels of Bennington County

Meals on Wheels provides more than 50,000 healthy meals to over 1,000 Bennington County residents. Three quarters of those are delivered to home-bound seniors, and the remainder are served at congregate meal sites. These gatherings also give seniors a chance to socialize. The healthy, low-fat meals exceed 1/3 the recommended daily nutritional allowance with three servings of fruits and vegetables. Meals are made from scratch incorporating donated foods from local farmers and the Vermont Foodbank. The cost of meals is partially funded by the Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging and Vermont Center for Independent Living. Clients over 60 are asked to donate \$4.00 per meal but most are unable to pay. The average donation is \$0.86

Contact: 802-442-8012 or www.mowbennington.org

Metro World Child [MWC]



The organization of Metro Ministries was founded in 1980 by Bill Wilson and is located in Brooklyn, NY. It was renamed Metro World Child as it expanded globally.

Its mission is to reach at-risk children with the message of the Gospel, to lead them into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and to the best of their ability meet whatever spiritual, practical, and emotional needs that arise. The estimate is that nearly 250,000 children are impacted by these programs.

FCC's dollars go directly to the annual sponsorship of two children who live in NYC. These children attend weekly Sunday School. The yearly donation also includes a summer camp experience for two NYC youth as well as book bags every school year. Personal letters and gifts are given to the two sponsored children. The congregation has also made stockings or sent money for gifts at Christmas to the NYC chapter of Metro Child. Therefore, Metro World Child is counted as a "national" donation.

Contact: 718-453-3352 or www.metroworldchild.org



Neighbor to Neighbor

Neighbor-to-Neighbor (N2N) was founded in 2004 in Manchester by a group of citizens who realized that transportation and support services were critical to enabling elders and the disabled in our community to live full, healthy,

connected lives. Matches are made between volunteers and care recipients. They are a nonprofit organization under the umbrella of the Interfaith Council of the Northshire.

Their office is now located in the FCC building. In addition to the one-on-one matches they also offer monthly group gatherings when it is possible.

Contact: 802-367-7787 or neighbortoneighborvt.org



Partners Against Violent Encounters [PAVE]

PAVE provides compassionate support, practical services and the pathway to healing and safety for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in our communities. Their emergency hotline is where it all began. Each year dedicated advocates answer thousands of calls and provide hundreds of individuals with services including assistance at court appearances, social service advocacy, emergency financial support, access to legal services, supervised visitation and more. Through the emergency shelter program thousands of beds have been provided to families fleeing their homes due to domestic violence. PAVE continues education and empowerment programs, reaching thousands of children, teachers, and adults.

Contact: 802-442-2370 or www.pavebennington.org



Rutland Dismas House

Dismas of Vermont has been providing post-prison transitional housing for over 30 years. Their mission is to “reconcile prisoners with society and society with prisoners.” The objectives are to reduce prison populations in Vermont by offering sober, supportive housing for men and women leaving Vermont prisons and providing a community of respect and hope for each resident. Each Dismas House offers a family-style home for up to ten residents from which people can seek employment, rebuild confidence and begin making a positive contribution to the community. Many who are ready to leave prison have no housing options or family to support them, so they remain incarcerated.

The cost of supporting a prisoner is 3 times the amount compared with a residential program. The Rutland Dismas House is a non-profit organization. Since it opened in 1990, nearly one thousand residents have lived there. In 2021 a second Rutland Dismas House opened for women prisoners transitioning to civilian life.

College students, international volunteers, and other community members live at the house, sharing conversation, and cooking meals with them. The residents are required to work and pay living expenses while assisting with household chores and volunteer activities. Residents engage in service projects and fun activities rebuilding community trust. We have been supporting Rutland Dismas since 2005 with funds and donated clothing. Visitors are welcome.

Contact: 802-699-8661 or www.dismasofvt.org



St. Helene's Foyer Children's Home - Haiti

Our Little Brothers and Sisters (Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos/NPH) was established by a Catholic priest over 60 years ago. There are nine children's homes throughout Latin America. The name of the one in Kenscoff, Haiti is St. Helene's Foyer Children's Home. A relationship between St. Helene's and FCC began in 2004 with a dental mission by Phil Ehret. Anne Ehret joined him in 2005 and they traveled annually to this orphanage to provide dental supplies and exams/procedures for eleven years. Other dentists have now taken on this dental mission. Since then, FCC has contributed to the general fund of this children's home.

The official mission of Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos (NPH) is "to provide shelter, food, clothing, healthcare and education in a Christian family environment based on unconditional acceptance and love, sharing, working and responsibility." Self-sufficiency is a cornerstone of the NPH philosophy; thus, many NPH homes grow much of their own food.

Each home also has its own primary and secondary school, clinic, and chapel. Reciprocity is another foundational ideal of NPH, which is why every child must give a year of service at their home after graduating high school and before going to college. This philosophy and mission engenders in NPH children a spirit of trust, confidence, and sharing toward others.

Contact: www.NPHHaiti.org, www.stlukehaiti.org,
and www.guidestar.org

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of Manchester, Vermont

MISSIONS OUTREACH



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