

## OUTREACH MISSIONS REPORT: 2019-2020

Weston UMC church family is reaching out into our local communities and the world, sharing the many and diverse gifts with which God has blessed us, and having a real impact on the lives of our neighbors in need, both near and far. We continue in our efforts, COVID-19 pandemic or not, to “Make Jesus Known in the World” and are following in Jesus’ footsteps as we reach out in love and compassion in His name.



**WHITTEMORE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, WALTHAM.** We have established a ministry of presence at Whittemore Elementary School. Into March 2020 (when the COVID-19 pandemic struck our area), we provided 384 bags of weekend supplemental food for distribution to the students most in need, as well as snack bags of Cheerios that were consumed by hungry kids who didn’t have a morning snack or needed afterschool food. And as of November 2020, we have resumed weekend food delivery at 32 bags per week, though no snacks are being provided now, and we have also provided roughly 50 books to be taken home in the past month. (For reference, in the prior school year we provided 1,248 bags of food and 5,850 snack bags, and between donations and the books that were donated by the Lincoln transfer station delivered nearly 1,000 books to the school.) We delivered roughly 30 pieces of emergency clothing between January and March 2020. The school is not allowed to distribute emergency clothing now. They have a Family Table where parents can get needed items at no cost. We have contributed roughly 40 clothing items including underwear, sweat pants, tops and winter hats. The congregation has provided sufficient money (\$4,800) to purchase winter coats for 125 children (classrooms have their windows open for ventilation during the COVID-19 pandemic, and at home some children are studying without heat!) Note that the majority of the parents are service providers such as cooks, bartenders, wait staff etc. These families have been hit very hard by the COVID-19 restrictions in their industries and the need is great. Missions budget \$3,700, and donations outside church budget.

**BRISTOL LODGE SOUP KITCHEN, WALTHAM.** Weston UMC church family continues to provide a full meal of nutritious food and refreshing water each month at the Grace Vision UMC basement in Waltham. Although in the past we prepared and served the meal, due to the COVID-19 pandemic now we are providing the items needed for the meal, which are then prepared by staff and provided as takeout meals to go. Through this program, dinner is provided every evening for the hungry in Waltham. Different churches and organizations take responsibility for one meal on a monthly basis, serving approximately 60-80 individuals. We share our food, talents, and time as we serve this “dinner for Jesus” on the second Monday of each month. (See photo from back when we were able to serve in person in 2019, and photos of all the items needed for this meal... some even provided from Toronto, Canada!) Funded by donations outside church budget.



**LITTLE FREE LIBRARY.** This is our most recent effort to engage with the local community during the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a sign and “mini-library” situated on a highly visible, high traffic location in front of our church building. It is stocked with free Bibles as well as prayer request forms, and a phone number to leave a voice mail message with prayer requests (781-894-5858) is advertised weekly on several nearby community’s Patch websites. These requests are shared with a group of dedicated prayer partners so that we might lift up those in need in our local community. (See photo along Route 117.)



**WESTON WINTER FESTIVAL.** During the winter, we have been involved in this more recent outreach effort the past 2 years. Our hope in participating has been to spread awareness of our church to families with school age children within the town of Weston. (See photo of the bright red vests our team members wore at the Weston Winter Festival in 2019. Brrr... it was really, really cold outside that day!)



**WORLD DAY OF PRAYER.** During the spring, people from around the world and in every region gather to collectively worship on the World Day of Prayer (first Friday in March). The service for our area was again held at Weston UMC this year, and many compassionate women and men from Weston and the surrounding communities joined in this inspirational service of prayer and song. Each year, a different country serves as the writer of the World Day of Prayer worship service. This year, the women of the World of Day Prayer Committee of Zimbabwe called us to worship with the words: “Rise! Take your mat and walk” (John 5:8). We were invited to learn about Zimbabwe’s history and rich culture. The women (portrayed by volunteers in costume) shared their stories of intergenerational wisdom, traditions, and experiences of God’s profound love. After worship, we stayed and enjoyed the aromas and flavors of some of Zimbabwe's tasty delicacies (provided by volunteers who followed authentic Zimbabwe recipes). Funded by donations outside church budget.

**CROP HUNGER WALK.** During the fall, Weston UMC church family has organized and participated in this ecumenical event sponsored by Church World Service and locally the Weston Clergy Association in past years. CROP Hunger Walk proceeds fight hunger both locally and worldwide, including areas ravaged by hurricanes and earthquakes. 25% of the funds raised in Weston have gone to the Bristol Lodge in Waltham and the Weston Council on Aging. It has been held annually for many years, however not in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic (and since the Weston Clergy Association has not been meeting). Praying for another event in 2021! (See photo from the CROP Hunger Walk in 2018.)



**TRUNK-OR-TREAT, LINCOLN.** On Halloween, Weston UMC has participated in annual community trunk-or-treat events, at which candy and other small items are given out safely to children from the trunks of cars in a parking lot. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year’s event, which took place at St. Anne’s Church in Lincoln, was a drive-thru edition. Of the maximum 15 trunks allowed at this year’s event, only six participated including Weston UMC. Each trunk could have a maximum of two volunteers

within the same household... and Carole and Joe were our two brave souls. All our treats were given out to the limited 70 cars participating. (See photos of Sally, Jen, and Carole at last year's Trunk-or-Treat, and Carole at this year's Trunk-or-Treat.)



**THANKSGIVING FOOD FOR WESTON COUNCIL ON AGING.** In the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving, Weston UMC church family has collected food donations for the Council on Aging Food Pantry. This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have not been worshipping in person weekly at the church, so instead there will be a garden cart to receive our donations outside the church. And during our brief outdoor Thanksgiving morning worship service of Thanks and Praise, there will be an offering basket for donations to the Weston Cares Fund, for the benefit of those in Weston and neighboring communities who have special needs due to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Donations outside church budget.

**ANGEL TREE.** During Advent in past years, angels were placed on our Advent Christmas tree, and we were invited to replace each angel with a gift for a child whose family was struggling financially. Last year we supported the New England Conference Economic Ministry in Maine with gifts of clothing, toys, and school supplies. This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our Weston UMC church family will be providing funds for gifts for 25 children at the Whittemore Elementary School. Funded by donations outside church budget.

**GENERAL BOARD OF GLOBAL MISSIONS.** Throughout the year, Weston UMC church family is supporting six Churchwide Special Sundays with offerings:

- Human Relations Day, which strengthens United Methodist outreach to communities in the United States and Puerto Rico, encouraging social justice and work with at-risk youth.
- UMCOR Sunday, which enables the United Methodist Committee on Relief to reach out through worldwide ministries of food, shelter, health and peace.
- Native American Ministries Sunday, which nurtures mission with Native Americans and provides scholarships for United Methodist Native American seminarians.
- Peace with Justice Sunday, which enables The United Methodist Church to have a voice in advocating for peace and justice through a broad spectrum of global programs.
- World Communion Sunday, which provides scholarships for U.S. racial- and ethnic-minority students and international students, on both undergraduate and graduate levels.
- United Methodist Student Day, which furnishes scholarships and loans for students attending United Methodist-related and other accredited colleges and universities.

Funded by donations outside church budget.

**WATCH.** The Waltham Alliance to Create Housing operates in Waltham and its contiguous communities. They build, preserve and promote affordable housing, provide economic opportunities for low- and moderate-income people, empowering communities and stabilizing neighborhoods. They help low

income families change society, find a better place to live, and find better employment. They also teach English as a Second Language and train volunteers as tutors to work one-on-one with learners. Weston UMC church family members have participated in teaching and tutoring ESL in the WATCH program. Missions budget \$2,000.

REACH, an acronym for: Refuge, Education, Advocacy and Change, is a multi-service agency in Waltham providing prevention, intervention, and advocacy services to thousands of families through community programs in the Metro West suburbs. REACH's mission is to advance the safety, healing, and empowerment of those who experience domestic or relationship violence, through direct services and education while promoting social justice for individuals and families of all backgrounds. Missions budget \$1,000.

BELMONT-WATERTOWN UMC is a small congregation with big hearts. They are a family of Christians who opens their Watertown site's doors to many area community groups, helping all to grow and thrive. Weston UMC church family assists our neighbors there by donating toward their heating fuel bill, to help them continue to provide a warm, welcoming home for all these ministries to the community. Missions budget \$500.

NEW ENGLAND DEACONNESS PERSONAL CARE CONTRIBUTION. We continue to respond to the need of some of the residents for assistance in caring for their personal appearance. Although many residents have family members who provide financial support for their care, others count on this support from organizations such as Weston UMC. Missions budget \$250.

CHILD FUND INTERNATIONAL (Formerly Christian Children's Fund). We have a longstanding relationship with the CFI/CCF. This year, we continue to support Sana in India, now in fifth grade. Missions budget \$292.

DISASTER RELIEF. We prayed for God's strength and comfort to be with the people whose lives were impacted by the hurricanes and wildfires, and also for all those responding to their cry for help, including Early Response Teams, disaster coordinators, and the many volunteers who worked tirelessly to provide relief. Donating through United Methodist Committee on Relief, 100% went to help survivors recover. Missions budget \$900, and flood buckets and health kits.

NEW ENGLAND JUSTICE FOR OUR NEIGHBORS. Justice for Our Neighbors (JFON) is a faith-driven ministry, welcoming immigrants into our churches and communities by providing free, high-quality immigration and legal services, education, and advocacy. Vision Statement: New England JFON is recognized as an effective justice-oriented resource for providing hospitable, compassionate and high-quality, legal services for immigrants. Through our work with immigrants, participating volunteers, and congregants, we also transform our culture's understanding of sensitivity to immigrant issues. Funded by donations outside church budget.

WESTON-WAYLAND INTERFAITH ACTION GROUP. The mission of the Weston-Wayland Interfaith Action Group (WWIAG) is to build community by developing a better understanding, acceptance, and appreciation of our individual, cultural, and religious differences through education, dialogue and action. At the request of local residents, WWIAG has served as a conduit for addressing issues concerning religious diversity in our community, which has helped to foster further understanding and appreciation of Weston's increasing diversity. The group focuses more on action than conversation. Its commitment to promoting interfaith awareness is based on building relationships among attendees of their programs through dialogue and also exerting influence over controversial community issues. Weston UMC is a member of this organization. Missions budget \$100.

ECUMENICAL DISCRETIONARY FUND. Churches of Weston have an interdenominational discretionary fund in order to serve unexpected or urgent needs within our community. This fund is based in St. Julia's Roman Catholic Church.

PASTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND. Weston UMC church family has provided our pastors with their own fund to serve unexpected or urgent needs as they become aware of them. Our pastors can contribute from here toward the Ecumenical Discretionary Fund.  
Budget \$4,000.

Thank you for all of the time and effort and loving support, both spiritual and financial, you have shared with those in need throughout the world. As a result of your prayerful commitment, we are making the love of Christ known both in our local community and far beyond the walls of Weston UMC.

Respectfully submitted,

Sally Hicks and Bob Hout  
Outreach Missions co-Chairpersons