

From the Missions Committee

2020 Annual Report to the Members of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh

Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Missions Committee worked diligently to engage more intentionally with local and global mission coworkers who receive support from FPCP. Zoom meetings greatly enhanced the committee's ability to have conversations across town and as far away as Honduras and Ukraine. The committee continued to review its guidelines and purpose in the context of best mission practices. In its traditional role, the committee functioned as faithful stewards of the "first fruits" title of FPCP ministry designated for missions. To expand awareness and participation, the committee has sought to generate better communication about mission coworkers, find advocates within the congregation to speak for mission relationships, widen understanding of the history and theology of missions at FPCP, and provide more mission experiences for members and friends.

With over two centuries of gospel-sharing intent, and the continued prayers and financial generosity of the present congregation, the committee has been blessed to serve in these ways in 2020:

- Connected meaningfully with mission partners in transition, or experiencing stress, illness and grief in the pandemic—notably Jonathan Bourbeau, Rachel & Michael Weller, Hope School in the West Bank, Lisa Anderson-Umana, a missionary family in North Africa, and PRISM (Pittsburgh Region International Student Ministries).
- Advocated for much needed conversations about racial inequity and injustice through sponsoring participation in October's virtual conference, "Jesus Christ and the 'Dividing Wall': Race and God's Mission," presented by World Mission Initiative at Pittsburgh Seminary.
- Organized FPCP Missions Sunday on October 4, with a special message, "Recentering Missions," based on John 12:20-26 and preached remotely by Rev. Juan Sarmiento, Executive Presbyterian of the San Fernando Presbytery.
- Sponsored a congregational initiative to "Buy a Bag," which raised funds for sleeping bags and tents distributed by street minister, Dave Lettrich of Bridge to the Mountains. Over \$7000 was gathered in this effort.
- Asked for support of "Under the Tree," an effort to provide gifts for international students who were unable to socialize or leave Pittsburgh because of the pandemic. Almost \$900 was collected and used to create 25 gift bags that were distributed by the staff at PRISM.
- Accompanied Bread of Life Church in Ukraine as they went through the hardships of COVID illness in their rehab homes. To meet existing needs, they also decided to purchase a property for a new men's home and construct a worship center. Thanks to numerous messages and videos, our relationship with Bread of Life Church grew deep in mutual caring and prayer. Along with FPCP's annual budget support, an additional \$2500 was given on Missions Sunday to help finish the worship center. Our support this year was critical, and Bread of Life is very grateful.

Gratefully submitted,
Judith Shipley
Chair, Missions Committee