



Outside Our Walls

Covenant United Methodist Mission & Outreach Newsletter

January 2023

Upcoming Events:

January: Collection of handwarmers & socks for the Rescue Mission
Feb. 22-April 9: Lenten Offering to raise funds for Nov. 4 Project 216 Packing Event



Imagine being homeless and not having socks or warm hands during the cold winter months.

In January Covenant will be collecting new socks & packages of hand warmers for those the Rescue Mission serves.

Leave your donations at the Mission Collection Center.

Can't shop? We'll shop for you if you make a donation for socks or hand warmer purchases.

Questions? Contact Barb Hering at barbhering@gmail.com

Mission & Outreach Team's Four Ministry Focuses

- 1. Lincoln Elementary School**
Covenant shares Jesus' love by helping, supporting, and caring for the students & staff.
- 2. The Fort Wayne Rescue Mission**
provides a home for the homeless, food for the hungry, and hope for their future.
- 3. Inasmuch Ministry** of Fort Wayne helps people in need, offers hope through a relationship with Jesus Christ, and promotes personal responsibility.
- 4. Life for Children Ministry in Kenya**
provides, housing, health care, education, food and spiritual nourishment for orphans of HIV/ Aids, and more for those in need.

The Team is also committed to the following missionaries:

- * Caleb & Amy Cox, thru Cru in Dallas,
- * Mason & Claire Miller thru, BlueSky in Nairobi, Kenya
- * Michael Agwanda, leader of Life for Children Ministry in Kenya

THE CORE VALUES OF THE MISSION & OUTREACH TEAM



Every decision we make - how we spend our time, our money, our energy - is based on the values that we hold most dear. Covenant's Mission & Outreach Team, with the help of studying the scriptures and referencing books such as *When Helping Hurts* and *Toxic Charity*, identified the key values that guide and direct its decisions.

We believe ...

... **everyone is called to serve.** As stated in John 13:14-15, Jesus modeled serving others throughout his entire ministry. We believe all those who follow Jesus are mandated to serve. We believe this helps us grow as disciples of Jesus Christ. We will therefore provide the resources & tools so that everyone at Covenant: children, youth, and adults are equipped to serve.

... **the best way to make disciples is by living out our faith with a servant attitude.** Based on James 2:18, we will encourage all those in the Covenant community to share the Good News of the gospel through active servanthood, prayer, and faith sharing relationships.

... **that in serving we are called to do no harm.** Based on John Wesley's, Three Simple Rules for Christian Living, "Do no harm, Do good, Stay in love with God", we believe that our service should empower people towards lives of self-sufficiency. Therefore we will first determine what is appropriate; supporting and/or funding relief efforts, rehabilitation and/or development as each situation requires.

... **we are called to serve the poor and the marginalized locally, nationally, and globally.** In Matthew 25:40, Jesus calls us to serve "the least of these". We will therefore serve and support ministries that work with the poor and marginalized.

... **we are called together to be the church to make a greater impact on the world.** Realizing the impact of the first church in Acts 2:42-47, we will follow their example and prayerfully seek guidance on how best to use the resources entrusted to us. Therefore, while we will encourage all people to serve individually, the Mission & Outreach Team will concentrate their efforts and encourage the Covenant community to focus on four specific ministries as a community.

... **we were created to partner with God.** Although use of our time, energy, and money reflects our commitment, we are not limited by the lack of these because God has all the time, energy, and money God needs. Therefore, we will prayerfully consider any ministry opportunity presented to us not limiting ourselves based on our own human understanding. Proverbs 3:5-6

In addition, the team has defined its primary objective:

"Empowering servants and transforming the world by targeting children and poverty."

These core values and our primary objective have helped the team prioritize its activities, guide its budget, and shape the direction of missions at Covenant.

*Mission & Outreach Team: Terry Pargmann and Barb Hering, co-chairs
Linnaea Arford, Sheryl Friedley, Janet Hall, Keith Hering, Cherie Hess, Nikki Miller, Peg Roser, Pastor Christi Murray, Pastor Chris Nunley,*

A THANK YOU FROM LINCOLN SCHOOL:



"Lincoln students and teachers were excited to hear that there had been a deposit made to allow all students be able to participate in the book fair. 260 of our 630 students did not bring money from home. We delivered a coupon to those students for a free book. Each of those students were able to then visit the book fair and select a book. While delivering the coupons to the students we heard the following statements from students:

- I've never been able to get a book at the fair. This is awesome.
- Whoever did this is so cool. Can you please tell them thank you?
- Are you kidding? Any book I want? Thank you so much.

And after they picked their book we were met with a few more fun statements:

- Do I get to keep this?
- This is like Christmas.
- Can I take this home to show my mom?

Thanks again for the gracious gift to our students. All of our staff is grateful for the partnership we have with your church.

Scott Geist, Assistant Principal"



Associated Churches' Neighborhood Food Network is where families can receive food once a month at no charge. The food banks are "emergency food banks" which provide a five-day supply of food to prepare balanced and nutritious meals as recommended by the Department of Agriculture nutrition food chart.

Food donated at Covenant will be taken to the Associated Churches Food Bank at Gethsemane Lutheran Church.

If you prefer, you may make a monetary donation to Covenant, indicating "Food Bank", and Associated Churches will use your donation to purchase food in bulk.

List of needed food items:

- Grains:** Rice, Oats/Oatmeal, Pasta/Noodles, Hamburger Helper, Ramen Noodles, Mac & Cheese, Crackers (any kind), stuffing, cereal, cake mix
- Proteins:** canned tuna/meat, canned beans, roasted nuts, peanut butter, granola bars
- Condiments:** canola, sesame or olive oil, salt & pepper, ketchup, mustard, spaghetti sauce, jelly, honey, salad dressing
- Other:** Jell-O, instant potatoes, dry milk
- Hygiene Products:** soap/body wash, detergent, deodorant, toothpaste/toothbrush, shampoo/conditioner, razors, toilet paper

NO GLASS PLEASE - DONATIONS MUST BE NON-PERISHABLE

To learn more about Associated Churches and their programs visit associatedchurches.org

Serve others by donating blood at Covenant's Red Cross Blood Drive



**Saturday, January 28
8:00-12:30**

The need for blood is constant!
You can help save up to 3 lives !

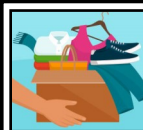
Who can you help by donating blood?

Every day, blood donors help patients of all ages: accident and burn victims, heart surgery and organ transplant patients, patients with chronic diseases, and those battling cancer.

Every two seconds, someone in the U.S. needs blood. There is no substitute for blood. When a patient receives blood, it was given in advance by a generous donor - will that donor be you?

Learn more & make an appointment at

redcrossblood.org



Cleaning out closets after Christmas because your children have received new clothes or have outgrown what they had?

The FWCS Clothing Bank is in need of clothing in all sizes, new or gently used, (underwear must be new and in original packaging). Personal care items are also needed.

Leave donations at the Mission Collection Center and we will deliver your donations for you.



Where does the Mission & Outreach Team get funding for projects and ministries they support?

The Mission & Outreach Team uses funds allocated to the team from the annual Covenant budget and money donated to specific mission projects.

If you wish to support a particular project (Food Bank, Rescue Mission, Lincoln, etc.) donate to Covenant, indicating the project name, and it will be used for the project you designate.

OR

If you make a donation to Covenant and indicate "Missions" your donation will be placed in a special designated fund to be used when funds aren't available for needs that arise during the year.

The Mission & Outreach Team sincerely thanks you for all of your prayers, in-kind donations, and financial support.

Questions? Contact Barb Hering at barbhering@gmail.com



News from Mason & Claire Miller (rec'd Dec. 16, 2022)

Merry Christmas from Mairobi! Joy to the world, friends!

There is something magical about celebrating Christmas in Kenya. Black Santa Claus makes me smile. Christmas carols being played everywhere. Not having the snow!!! The emphasis placed on the weary world rejoicing. Our heart aches to spend Christmas morning with family, but wrapping presents for the kids from grandparents and aunts and uncles is such a joy.



This month has been a gift! So many good things have happened. We led spiritual emphasis week for a nearby school and had a lot of touching moments from that. Students sharing about how they have felt far from being "whole" and how they have been waiting for permission to lay down the burdens of their "heavy backpacks" (representing the lies spoken over them, the shame they carry, and the brokenness they feel.)

We have begun partnering with our church in helping to lead the youth there. We helped out at youth camp leading team building games and devos. During a blindfolded obstacle course where the guide stands back, one girl asked mason if she could bring her guide closer. The game stopped so we could reflect on how much easier life would be if we could have a guide walking closely to us, directing our steps, keeping us out of harms way, and leading us to victory. "We do!!! It's the Holy spirit!!!" one student shouted.

We also got to lead BlueSkys first ever family adventure camp. Time as a family is really something a lot of families lack in Kenya. Time to connect, put phones and work away, and focus on the gift of family. We led devotions on how God wants our family to function well, with healthy communication, trust, and patience.



And of course beautiful ministry moments in between. I (Claire) started coaching U19 girls soccer (am I an assistant coach or a cheerleader/counselor/motivator who has very few soccer skills but love these students...they'll never know!!) Our youth group and homeschool co-op group continue to grow and our students continue to trust us and open up more and more about the hardships in their lives and where they are at in their faith. During team building with our homeschool co-op, one of our games was revolving around the story of grinch. One of the students reflected that when we have everything removed like The Who's of whoville, we should still have joy because Jesus is the greatest gift. How convicting!!!

Our babies continue to thrive! They loved visiting Nairobi National Park and camping over Thanksgiving break. Their friendship is continuing to grow...I often find them hiding in the closet or under the table together playing (with a few pushes or elbows to the face here and there...) Holland just learned how to kiss and LOVES kissing her brother! He feels...okay...about this.

Compassion and empathy are two of my core values. I think it is what makes the broken world tolerable. But man, has God really pressed me on those points this week. In a way where I had to ask myself "when the rubber hits the road—when you are really stretched and inconvenienced, will you still place so much emphasis on compassion and empathy?" This week we had a 22 year old orphan, Pamela, move in with us. My godmother has been sponsoring her education, food, and medical bills over the past eleven years. I've been hearing about Pamela for years as Maryrose has tried to connect us when we were in Kenya before. After leaving the orphanage, Pamela went to get her certificate in hospitality and catering, and as it was coming to a close, she had no where to go. With no surviving family and no friends with space to take her in, she was stranded and in a really unsafe situation. She has to wait until February to find out her exam results and so she cannot begin her job search. Oftentimes, orphaned girls in Kenya turn to prostitution out of desperation. Hearing about this, Mason and I were moved to compassion. We have a spare bedroom and wanted to help her for a few months. As we prepared to meet her, we started to think through some harder things: how do we share space with someone while making both parties feel comfortable? How do we live well cross-culturally?

How do we communicate without us having much Swahili and without her knowing much English? How do we find the time in our busy schedules to take her to doctor appointments for a foot that needs surgery, get her clothes (she came with 2 shirts and 2 pants), food that she likes, and items to make her feel comfortable and welcome? It's easy to notice the discomfort and inconvenience in the situation, and at times I haven't felt as compassionate as I would like. But then, yesterday in the car on the way home from a consultation about the surgery, Pamela started sharing about her life story. The hardships of losing her family. The abuse at a job she suffered. The lack of mentoring and discipleship she has had. And God spoke to me in that moment "she needs a mom." I talked back "I don't want to be a mom to her! I don't have time to do that! I already am a mom!"... "Exactly Claire. You already are a mom. She needs a mom. She needs nurturing love and guidance and care." What a lightbulb moment for me. I don't feel resentful to my kids when they are in pain and in need of direction. I do it with joy.

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So even though Pamela is 22, we have taken her under our wings with the love of Jesus that moves us to action. In the story of the Good Samaritan, we see that compassion isn't just a feeling but an action. The grace of God leads us to move, often in uncomfortable ways. The Good Samaritan gave his money, resources and TIME (oof—this is the hardest one for this busy American!!!!). Often I looked at that story with a sense of "oh how nice." Now I look at that story with a lot more understanding of how much he gave but also how much JOY he received in the giving. To care for someone in need sounds pretty and nice, but can also look like tears and confusion and culturally misunderstandings and mostly LOVE. So how are you allowing God to inconvenience you with compassion? How are you allowing Him to mold you into looking more like Jesus who never made people feel like a burden, no matter how far he had to walk to them? I definitely haven't done it perfectly. I'm still learning the balance and how to offer love well. But I trust that His grace is sufficient. I trust that I will learn so much from Pamela. I trust when I humble myself beauty will happen.

We would be honored if you would pray about partnering with us as we care for Pamela. This week she had a foot surgery for \$820 and is now looking to set up a shop for work. We are looking for \$75 in monthly donors to go towards her food/transportation/job setup fees. This would be separate from monthly gifts that go towards our family and ministry in Nairobi. If you feel led to give, we would be so grateful! Gifts can be made through venmo: @Claire-Miller-99

We could also use prayers for:

- other people to come alongside in mentoring and discipling Pamela. It takes a village!!
- her to get a job
- us as we teach her time management and independent living skills our relationship with her to be close so that we can share openly and honestly!

Sending you love and sunshine across the ocean. Forever grateful for your support!

With love,
 Claire, Mason, Zion and Holland



BlueSky Global Ministries' vision is to see the multinational community of Nairobi, Kenya, spiritually transformed and equipped to influence the world for God's glory. They pursue this by building relationships through adventure, using three core platforms: BlueSky Adventures (rock climbing gym, expedition trips, and team building), Camp BlueSky, and BlueSky Community (year-round relational ministry). Learn more at blueskyglobal.org

Covenant helps to support Mason & Claire and their ministry by sending them \$415 a month, which comes from the Mission & Outreach Team's budget. Your donations to the church budget make this possible - thank you!