



Outside Our Walls

Covenant United Methodist Mission & Outreach Newsletter

January 2026

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Jan. 2026: Food Collection - Soup
"Mmmmm, Mmmmm, Good"

Jan. 17: Blood Drive at Covenant

Feb. & Mar. : Lenten Offering to raise funds for Project 216 Food Packing Event on Nov. 7, 2026



The Mission & Outreach Team thanks all who have made a Faith Promise Giving Commitment for 2026!

Because of the commitments to Faith Promise, the Mission Team is excited to announce that Covenant will be able to help support the following in 2026:

- * Missionaries Caleb & Amy Cox and Michael Agwanda
- * Lincoln Elementary School Rising Stars Ministry
- * Inasmuch Ministry
- * Forgotten Stones Ministry
- * Life for Children Ministry projects
- * Life for Children Ministry orphans
- * Associated Churches Food Bank
- * UMCOR
- * Bashor Children's Home
- * Mission Guatemala

Be sure to indicate "Faith Promise" on your donations, even if you filled out a commitment card. Faith Promise donations may be made by check, on-line (covenantumc.net), or on Covenant's app.

You may still make donations to a specific ministry of your choice - just be sure to indicate the ministry where you want your money to be sent.

Questions? Contact Barb Hering at
barbhering@gmail.com

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 and 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 4 specific ministries as a community (Life for Children Ministry, Inasmuch Ministry, Forgotten Stones Ministry, and Lincoln Elementary School).

... 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 understanding.

In addition, the team has defined its primary objective:

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



2026 CHRISTMAS ANGEL PROJECTS

THANK YOU, COVENANT!

**NOVEMBER**

- * **GIFTS FOR BYRON WELLNESS COMMUNITY RESIDENTS:** Wish lists from 25 residents, many who are lonely and forgotten at Christmas, were filled. Thank you to Peg & Steve Roser for leading this project.
- * **FOOD BANK COLLECTION:** "Share the Feast" ~ Your many donations were packed in bags and given to those at the Food Bank who also received a turkey to make a complete meal for the holiday.

DECEMBER

- * **GIFTS FOR CHILDREN OF THE CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) PROGRAM:** 126 Gifts and 17 gift cards were purchased and delivered to make Christmas special for 21 children in 9 families. Thank you to Julie Hyndman and her helpers for leading this project.
- * **CHRISTMAS OFFERING:** A special offering was collected during the month of December to celebrate the birth of Jesus and make a difference in others' lives. The offering will be divided equally among **Life for Children Ministry in Kenya, Inasmuch Ministry and Forgotten Stones Ministry** (the amounts collected will be announced at a later date)

Four Ministry Focuses of Covenant's Mission & Outreach Team

1. **Lincoln Elementary School:** Covenant shares Jesus' love by helping, supporting, and caring for the students, staff and families of Lincoln.
2. **Inasmuch Ministry of Fort Wayne:** helps people in need by offering hope through a relationship with Jesus Christ and promotes personal responsibility. See page 4.
3. **Forgotten Stones:** a ministry in Fort Wayne whose focus is to make the homeless known by providing Circles of Allen County, a Representative Payee, a Day Shelter and care and love for the homeless. See an update on page 5.
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. See Christmas greetings on page 5.

**Thank you to Sisters of the Heart,
a group of 14 women at Covenant.**

During their Christmas luncheon Sisters of the Heart held a baby shower for Associated Churches' "A Baby's Closet" and had a "show & tell" of baby items they had purchased. They stuffed a large tote with blankets, outfits, baby bottles, baby towels plus a case of baby wipes (with a value of \$286) and collected \$90. These were all delivered to "A Baby's Closet" and were much appreciated.

The group also donated \$210 to Mustard Seed Furniture Bank to sponsor a bed and bedding.

Many lives were touched by this group's caring hearts!



**Be a Hero:
Donate Blood!
Covenant's next
blood drive is on
January 17!**

Every 2 seconds, someone needs blood.

Every day, blood donations help patients of all ages:

- ⇒ accident and burn victims,
- ⇒ heart surgery and organ transplant patients,
- ⇒ those battling cancer.
- ⇒ The list goes on and may include someone you know and love.

Giving blood gives hope and courage to patients anxiously awaiting the chance to live healthy, full lives.

Check out the ["Be A Hero Donor Guide"](#) and make an appointment to donate at Covenant on January 17!

For more information contact

Gina Loomis at
sam-gina@frontier.com



PRAYER Request

Prayers needed for Zion Miller, the son of Mason and Claire Miller and grandson of Covenant members, Ron and Nikki Miller. Covenant helped to support Mason and Claire as they served in Nairobi, Kenya as missionaries with BlueSky. They are now back in the states, living and working in Michigan and are asking for your prayers. The following was posted by Claire on Dec. 15 on Face Book:

Merry Christmas everyone we wanted to come on and ask for prayer for our sweet Zion David! 5 years ago Zion had a craniotomy - big word for a big head surgery. Last week we found out he needs another surgery, this time a skull expansion. Mason and I were (are) devastated, but Zion came home and said "mama, we just have to pray for a miracle. God can heal anything!" And isn't that true. We are grieving, but with a weird peace and hope. What if this little five year old is spearheading his own prayer team for God's glory? Join us in praying for a miracle please. And if no miracle, we trust God is still good & loving & can bring hope and peace there too. But selfishly this mom heart feels like it's been through too much & would love to just have the miracle, k? Zion chose this verse to say on repeat in the following weeks: "Now faith is the assurance of what we hope for and the certainty of things not seen"



A surgery date has not been set at the time of the printing of this newsletter.

Northrop students LOVE all the donations of INDIVIDUAL packaged snacks:

chips, pretzels, cookies, crackers, pop tarts, energy bars, etc.



Thank you for all your donations made already this year!
We will continue to collect these items thru the school year which you can leave in the marked box by the Mission Collection Center.

Did you know?



All loose change collected on Sunday mornings is put into an account for Life for Children Ministry and is used for that ministries' needs. The little change we carry around can make a big difference when combined together.

Alive Community Outreach Is Making A Difference!

This year, Fort Wayne continues to navigate heartbreakingly high levels of youth violence. Yet in the middle of this challenge, something extraordinary is growing: young leaders are choosing nonviolence, survivors are finding community and healing, and schools are creating safer, more connected environments.



- **Hundreds of students** in every FWCS high schools are receiving nonviolent leadership development through the Peacemaker Initiative.
- **Youth in crisis** are finding a safe, supportive place in the Peace Rooms at their high schools, where conflict turns into reconciliation.
- **Families who have lost loved ones to homicide** are not left to navigate their grief alone - they receive support through groups, care, and connection.

To learn more about Alive Community Outreach visit alivefw.org

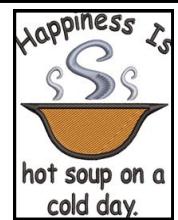
**December Food Collection:
THANK YOU!!!**

Thank you for the variety of foods donated to help keep Gethsemane Lutheran Food Bank stocked.



**January Food Collection:
MMM, MMM, Good!**

Help stock the Gethsemane Lutheran Food Bank with cans of soup and help warm our hungry neighbors.



Fort Wayne Community School Clothing Bank
Making room for new clothes received this Christmas?



The FWCS Clothing Bank (1511 Catalpa St.) would appreciate any donations of clothing, in good clean condition, to be able to provide clothing to thousands of students and their families in need this year. Students and their families receive clothes, shoes, coats, toiletries and other items as needed because of poverty or homelessness or following a disaster such as a flood or fire. Students are referred to the clothing bank by a case manager or counselor at their school. The Clothing Bank operates with the support of monetary donations and donations of new and gently used clothing.

List of needed items:

Personal hygiene products (must be NEW): soap, shampoo/conditioner, toothpaste & toothbrushes, tampons & pads, brushes/combs, hair accessories, bodywash, deodorant (spray & stick), lotion

Clothing (new or gently used): clothing (sizes 4T- adult plus); boots/shoes (children & adult sizes); coats; hats; gloves/mittens; NEW socks (all sizes); NEW underwear (all sizes); NEW bras/sports bras (all sizes)

Leave donations at the Mission Collection Center

To learn more visit fortwayneschools.org/families/community/clothing-bank

Inasmuch Ministry “Truly I say to you, in as much as you did it to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.” — Matthew 25:40

What does Inasmuch Ministry provide to those who come to them for help?

- ⇒ **Food:** the food bank is open to anyone for food, household items, and hygiene assistance. Clients may visit every 14 days.
- ⇒ **Clothing:** Inasmuch has a large variety of clean, gently worn, and new clothing available in all sizes. Anyone may visit the Clothing Closet every 14 days. Donations of clothing are much appreciated.
- ⇒ **Local Bus Passes:** for job searches and medical appointments. Monthly local bus passes are available at a reduced rate for senior citizens and individuals on disability.
- ⇒ **Recovery of Lost Identification:** birth certificate and marriage license recovery.
- ⇒ **Limited financial assistance for housing and utilities:** individuals must visit their township trustee first for an action letter before coming to Inasmuch for financial help. Certain criteria must be met before assistance will be offered. Financial assistance is available once a year.
- ⇒ **Housing & Eviction Concerns:** a case manager from Just Neighbors is available to discuss concerns.
- ⇒ **Love, kindness, acceptance and the hope and salvation of Jesus Christ for all who enter their doors**



An example of how Inasmuch is touching and changing lives from Mary Ann Mings on Sunday, Dec. 14:

“One of our clients, has been coming for about a year. He is a different faith than us, but is always respectful when we pray or talk about Jesus. At first, he was a little skeptical of us, but over time, has been a huge supporter of us. Brittney helped him in finding a new job. His employer told me that when they asked him about IAM, “he lit up”. They said he told them how much he loves us, and is going to be teaching personal defense training for us.”

Covenant's Mission Team will be donating to Inasmuch Ministry from your Faith Promise Giving.

You can also donate directly to Inasmuch by writing a check to Covenant (indicate "Inasmuch"), or on Covenant's website or app.

Volunteers are always needed at Inasmuch Ministry to serve in a variety of roles. If interested in learning more, contact Barb Hering at barbhering@gmail.com.

Visit inasmuchfw.org/ to learn more about the ministry.

Dear Friends at Covenant United Methodist Church,

Here is an update for our various programs within the Forgotten Stones organization:

- ⇒ **Day Shelter:** Over 175 individuals have been through the doors of the Day Shelter for Unhoused Individuals since the beginning of the summer. This is in spite of the 24/7 warming shelters that have been open since December 1. People continue to come to this Day Shelter because they are loved and accepted here. This has become their safe place for two mornings a week.
- ⇒ **Employment Opportunities:** Three individuals have found employment with the Grand Wayne Center. Of the six gentlemen we have helped find employment, at least two are up for promotions.
- ⇒ **Housing for the Unhoused:** Forgotten Stones continues to place the unhoused into boarding houses or apartments. At least one of our couples has even moved on to an apartment from the boarding house and another couple is saving up their money so that they can do the same thing.
- ⇒ **Representative Payee Program:** This program continues to grow and we will soon be up to 10 clients. One client who had been in debt for quite some time when he began the program, will be debt free by the end of February.
- ⇒ **Circles of Allen County:** The Circle Leaders are almost finished with their training and have been matched with their Allies. Budgets have been completed, and weekly tracking of income and expenses has begun. The Leaders are now working towards meeting their goals of saving \$1,000 and becoming debt free among other personal goals. One of our Circle Leaders completed her GED and will soon begin welding classes.



Donations to Faith Promise Giving will be used to help support Forgotten Stones.

In the midst of constantly changing Federal guidelines and funding resources, we ask for your prayers for more church and individual supporters so that we can continue with this work to help those who are most vulnerable in our community. Thank you for your continued support and for your recent gifts totaling \$925. Sincerely,

Debbie Smith, Director of Financial Services (forgottenstonesfortwayne@gmail.com)



Life for Children Ministry Christmas Greeting

Christmas truly is a season of wonder - a time when hearts overflow with love and joy, even in the midst of life's challenges. Because of you, the light of Christmas shines in the lives of our orphans and their families not just in December, but throughout the entire year.

In 2025, we celebrated remarkable milestones made possible through your kindness and faithfulness. Your gifts have provided animals and greenhouses that continue to sustain and empower the Wachara families. And because of your generosity here are just a few of the blessings you helped make possible this year:

- * 190 children sponsored in school - with a 100% retention rate
- * 14 new homes built for widows, offering safety dignity, and renewed hope.
- * 5,983 street children reached with food, care, and the message that they are seen and loved.
- * 1,200+ people received clean, life-giving water through a newly drilled borehole.

Each number represents a life touched, a burden lifted, and a future strengthened - all because you chose to give. Words can hardly express the depth of our gratitude. Yet please know this: every act of compassion you extend echoes through our community in powerful ways. From the very core of our hearts, we thank you for your unwavering support. Together, we stand as one family - united by love, strengthened by faith, and committed to transforming lives and nurturing hope for those who need it most.

Thank you for being a light of hope to the children and families we serve.

Yours in faith,

Michael Agwanda and the LCM Board

Covenant will continue to support the orphans and the projects of Life for Children Ministry with donations to Faith Promise Giving.

Mission Matching Game : can you match the ministry with the service?

1. __ Where you can donate household items, furniture and building supplies
2. __ Supports HIV/Aids orphans
3. __ Provides help in classrooms
4. __ Provides mentors to help those in poverty learn how to manage their money and become self-sufficient
5. __ Packages nutritious meals
6. __ Provides bus passes to look for work
7. __ Supplies food for food banks
8. __ Covenant's team that makes decisions on the focus of Missions through Covenant
9. __ Where troubled youth find love and help
10. __ Helps to house the homeless
11. __ 100% of money donated to this ministry is used towards designated projects
12. __ Builds homes for those in need
13. __ Provides financial help with utilities
14. __ Saves 3 lives with a donation
15. __ Serves meals 3 x a day for any who comes
16. __ Provides programming and place to stay for homeless women & children
17. __ Tutoring program for elementary students
18. __ Where you can donate clothing & household items (more than one answer)
19. __ A program of FWCS to provide clothing to students and their families in need
20. __ Where parents experiencing hardships can go for essential baby items to care for their children
21. __ Where you can meet and talk with Northrop H.S. students to show you care
22. __ Provides household furnishings to people after a disaster or personal tragedy

Many of these places are looking for volunteers! Please consider making a difference by helping! Contact Barb Hering to learn more.

Ministry Names
(may use more than once)

- A. Forgotten Stones
- B. Risings Stars
- C. Inasmuch Ministry
- D. Life for Children Ministry
- E. Bashor Homes
- F. A Baby's Closet
- G. Peace Family Lunch Table
- H. Red Cross Blood Drive
- I. Associated Churches
- J. Mission & Outreach Team
- K. Rescue Mission
- L. Circles of Allen County
- M. Study Connection
- N. FWCS Clothing Bank
- O. Charis House
- P. Project 216
- Q. Habitat for Humanity
- R. UMCOR
- S. Habitat ReStore
- T. Mustard Seed Furniture Bank
- U. Treasure House
- V. Charis House

Answers: 1-S, 2-D, 3-B, 4-L, 5-P, 6-C, 7-I, 8-J, 9-E, 10-A, 11-R, 12-Q, 13-C, 14-H, 15-K, 16-O, 17-M, 18-C & U, 19-N, 20-F, 21-G, 22-T

*"Do all the good you can.
By all the means you can.
In all the places you can.
At all the times you can.
To all the people you can.
As long as ever you can."*
- John Wesley

Some logos of the Ministries listed

