

Missions Committee Report

January 26, 2019

On December 3, 2018, our meeting began with a discussion of what we understand the meaning of the word "Mission" to be. How are our responsibilities to lead, challenge and resource the churches of PWNC in "missions" different from the work of the Hunger, Peace and Justice, and Evangelism Committees (among others)? Helping the presbytery and its churches fulfill the great commission in Matthew 28 certainly plays a big part in our "job description", but it is more than that. The challenge of Jesus in Matthew 25 to care for the "least of these" is also not beyond the scope of our work, though there may be some overlap here with these other committees. Many churches have developed a "mission statement" or "mission goals". Perhaps one of our goals is to be available to help churches reach their missions goals, whatever they may be.

Mission Interpretation:

- a.) A letter will be sent out to around 20 churches of 100 members or more encouraging them to consider supporting a mission co-worker.
- b.) We discussed how our committee, or a member thereof, might serve as contact liaison for the itineration of visiting mission co-workers in the presbytery. We request that churches who are planning to host a mission co-worker get in touch with Ellen Dozier (Email: ellendozier@hotmail.com, Home phone: 828-862-3995) to let her know. She will be glad to work with you in getting out publicity and invitations to surrounding churches.

Mission Personnel:

We will be giving a Christmas gift of \$200 to those Mission Co-workers who have a direct relationship to PWNC - the Van Brocklins, Turks, and John McCall.

Mission Work Teams Report:

- a.) The recent trip to Fayetteville, NC was successful. (see accompanying article)
- b.) Spring, 2019 Disaster Assistance Trips:

Two groups will be going to eastern NC this Spring. The first group will be going to Wilmington, NC, staying at First Presbyterian Church, April 28 – May 4, 2019 (maximum 14).

A second group will be traveling to Lumberton, NC, staying at Chestnut Street UMC, May 5-11, 2019 (maximum 12). Information will be available through PWNC office. Joanne Mitchell and Bob Abel will work on putting more detailed information and pictures on the presbytery web site to answer questions about what a disaster assistance trip entails. Registration forms should be available from PWNC office in January.

Young Adults in Mission (YAVs):

Members of our committee will be exploring how to better promote this valuable ministry/mission opportunity among PWNC churches, especially among young adults who could benefit as participants.

PWNC Disaster Preparedness Plan Report:

Missions Committee 1.) encourages every church to be part of their community's response plan, and 2) requests every church to communicate with presbytery office when they have a disaster/needs for prayer support and concrete assistance as opportunity arises. Having someone(s) from PDA come to the presbytery to present a workshop on developing a more involved plan will be looked into.

How Missions Committee can better communicate with churches:

Missions Committee would like to be able to communicate with local churches regarding their mission efforts and needs. We will be asking C.O.M. if their representatives who call and visit all the PWNC churches could ask for the name, email and phone number of the person in charge of missions. Then we can contact that person and ask what we can do to help/resource them.

Next mtg.: Monday, March 4, 2019 from 12:30-2:30pm at Black Mountain Pres.



Fayetteville Disaster Assistance Team: Front row. Dick Grier and Gerri Tulley (Highlands Pres.), Bobbi Trick (1st Hickory), Dale Sticka (Highlands Pres), Russ Rankin (Hayesville Pres.).
Back Row. Brian Schroeder (1st Gastonia), Phil Trick (1st Hickory), Bob Abel (Hayesville Pres.), Chuck Shelton (Morrison Pres., Franklin). Not pictured: Greg Joplin (1st Newton).

Two disaster assistance trips were planned for this Fall. Nine volunteers were planning to go to Lumberton, NC September 14-20. However, Hurricane Florence hit just before this week, and the trip had to be canceled.

The second disaster assistance team was successful in going to Fayetteville, NC October 14-20. The team was made up of 10 volunteers from 6 of our PWNC churches (see above). We stayed in the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) host site in Fayetteville, Highland Presbyterian Church, a church of almost 800 members that has set aside a portion of their church facility to house, shower, and feed groups. Members of our group prepared delicious meals each morning and evening and led devotionals. We left the church each morning around 8am for our jobsite, which was overseen by NC United Methodist Church Disaster Recovery personnel, and returned around 5pm. These hard-working folks do the interviews of applicants needing help with their houses, provide the materials to repair the houses, and give oversight for the work that needs to be done. For a couple of years, they have been working with the many houses damaged by Hurricane Matthew in 2016. Their work load has been increased dramatically with the many additional houses recently damaged by Hurricane Florence in eastern NC.

The house we worked on had received damage from Hurricane Matthew. The family has been living in the house, but have needed work done on their roof, garage, kitchen floor (we replaced it), and siding (we got the front of the house redone with hardie board). Other parts of the house also needed attention. A group of 20+ from PA came in the next week to pick up where we left off.

Keep your eyes open for information about our Spring disaster assistance trip(s). We had several new folks join our “veterans” this time and hope this trend continues.

Presbytery Mission Trips

Two Opportunities to Volunteer

April 28 – May 4 Wilmington

May 5 – 11 Lumberton

Cost: \$50

Mission groups provide home repair and maintenance on houses devastated by Hurricane Florence. Examples of things the team could do: gutting, removing damaged walls, ceilings, and floors and otherwise preparing homes for reconstruction, installing insulation and sheetrock, drywall mudding, flooring and painting.



Interested?

More information and application
on the Presbytery website:

<https://presbyterywnc.org/>



Or call the Presbytery office. Phone: 828.438.4217





PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE

OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE

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PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE

OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE

Spring, 2019 Two PWNC Disaster Assistance Trips

April 28 – May 4, 2019 PDA Host Site, FPC Wilmington, NC
Maximum group size - 14.

May 5 – May 11, 2019 NCCUMC Host Site, Chestnut Street UMC, Lumberton, NC. Maximum group size – 12.

Information and Registration Forms available from presbytery office. Phone: 828.438.4217 Cost: \$50

Hurricane Florence

The eye of Hurricane Florence came ashore on September 14, 2018, on Wrightsville Beach, about 8 miles east of Wilmington First Presbyterian Church. The five-day rain accumulation made it the wettest tropical cyclone ever recorded in North Carolina. The area's soils were already saturated from earlier rain, so the 36 inches of rain dropped in this storm caused extensive flooding throughout southeastern North Carolina. Some homes were damaged by rising waters, others by falling waters, and some by both. Southeastern North Carolina needs help in recovering from this hurricane.

What Will Mission Groups Do?

Some mission groups will primarily be removing damaged walls, ceilings, and floors and otherwise preparing homes for reconstruction. But our Work Partners have already begun preparations for the rebuilding phase, which will include installing insulation and sheetrock, drywall mudding, flooring and painting.

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PWNC Guatemala Partnership Update

January 2019

Updates from Guatemala:

Greetings from Guatemala!

As churches from the PWNC are gathered for the January 2019 Presbytery Meeting, our PWNC Guatemala Partnership Committee is in route to San Felipe, Guatemala!

We appreciate your prayers as we travel (January 26-February 5th) and fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Our committee will spend the week meeting with the partnership committees from our sister presbyteries of Sur Occidente and Suchitepéquez to share joys, concerns, and opportunities for this partnership.

Both of our sister presbyteries, Sur Occidente and Suchitepéquez continue to navigate leadership changes.

1. Sur Occidente- Has named brother, Ronald Alvarez as the new coordinator of the Guatemala partnership. Scholarship reports for all PWNC churches who have sister churches in Sur Occidente have been submitted to the PWNC Education Committee for distribution to our local churches.
2. Suchitepéquez- Coordinator, Margoth Vela, immigrated to the United States in early September 2018 leaving her position vacant. Suchi has named Pastor Osmundo Ponce as the interim coordinator until a new coordinator is named. Suchitepéquez will be sending scholarship reports to their sister churches back with the PWNC education committee in early February 2019.

Focus areas for our Guatemala Leadership team:

1. Completion of a “Passport to Partnership” to outline the history, current projects, guidelines, and key policies for PWNC churches who participate in the Guatemala Partnership. Upon approval by the PWNC in early 2019 it will be distributed to ALL PWNC churches, new pastors, mission chairs, etc.
2. Committee work/special projects- The microloan, health, and education projects continue to create positive impact in Guatemala but the PWNC is aware that continued conversations are needed with both Suchi and Sur to make sure long-term goals/processes are agreed upon.
3. Men in the Mirror curriculum- We are excited to announce that this program, focused on addressing domestic violence in Guatemala, continues to grow. Rev Mateo Gonzales has worked closely with Brian Thompson Royer (PCUSA) and Pastor Kevin Frederick (PWNC) to edit the curriculum for use in our sister churches and he has been commissioned by the PCUSA Guatemala Partnership network to implement the curriculum in Presbyteries throughout Guatemala. Pastor Kevin will spend two days with facilitators to jump start this process. Funding for this project is coming from five PCUSA Presbyteries and individual churches.

REMINDER UPDATE!

Due to changes in leadership in our sister presbyteries in Guatemala and concerns voiced by churches in the PWNC regarding 5-year commitments, the partnership committees are revisiting the covenant renewal process guidelines and will present proposed guidelines to the PWNC for approval. We encourage all PWNC churches who have sister churches in Guatemala to use the upcoming months to engage in prayerful and intentional conversations to determine hopes and or intentions of your church to church/scholarship covenants and please communicate your hopes, concerns, and intentions to PWNC's Guatemala Partnership Coordinator, Marie Palacios.

All PWNC churches should expect to receive calls and emails from our partnership committee to address covenant renewals and other partnership opportunities in the upcoming months!

2019 Guatemala Travel Updates

January 26-February 5, 2019 – Joint Partnership Meeting in Guatemala

February 5-14, 2019- Microloan trip to Guatemala*

Upcoming PWNC Delegations

Trip Date: May 16-23, 2019

Application Closed

Trip Date: November 7-14, 2019

Application deadline: April 1, 2019

Registration forms for trips are posted on the PWNC website under the Guatemala Partnership.

**If you are interested in participating in a delegation trip or if your church is planning a trip in the upcoming year, please contact Marie Palacios, PWNC Guatemala Partnership Coordinator: Email: pwncguatemala@gmail.com Cell: 828-838-4245*

Guatemala Microloan Project Update

Introducing Two New Groups to the Guatemala Microloan Project

Thanks to a Presbyterian Women Thank Offering grant and a partnership with Covenant Presbyterian Church in Palo Alto, CA and Westminster Presbyterian Church in Portland, OR, two new microloan groups were started in October 2018. A group of 12 women was formed in **Sintaná**, a community outside of Coatepeque. The second group of 16 women was formed in the community of **El Progreso**, located in the municipality of Mazatenango.



**Twelve members of Coffee Flower Women Entrepreneurs from Sintaná.
Flor, on staff with ADEHGUÁ, is pictured on far left and Mildre on far right.**

Mildre and Flor, on staff with ADEHGUÁ, the NGO that administers the project, are very pleased with how quickly the groups are learning. Prayer support is an essential aspect of the microloan project. If you or your group are interested in serving as a prayer partner for one of these new participants, contact Sue Barrett at suebar@comporium.net or 828-553-3621. Prayer partners will receive information and photos of the woman for which they are assigned to pray.



Sixteen members of Women Workers With Hope from community of El Progreso.

Evaluation of the Microloan Project

Following three years of participation in the microloan project, the four original groups had the opportunity to evaluate its impact. Here are a few highlights of their responses:

Las Animas: The women enjoy seeing each other often. **Lesvia** comments that the project has been an “awakening of women.” **Merari** found the workshops attracted her to learn, and although she was scared initially because she didn’t know how to do things, she was taught. She believes the best part is becoming independent as women. **Olga** says she and her husband both make the decisions, that women can also decide and have the ability to be in charge.

Santo Domingo: Unemployment and poverty in Guatemala continue to make it difficult to earn enough for household expenses, medical needs, and children’s education, but the project has been helpful, and the women are more active.

Coatepeque: The women have learned to share experiences, deal with differences, be more patient, love themselves, and save money. They enjoy the communion that participation in the group brings. The workshops are interesting, and they share with others what they learn.

San Felipe: **Aury** considers the microloan group an extension of her church’s work, and it is a blessing to her and her family. The group encourages the women, exhorts them, and leads them to work more and together. **Kelita** has gained new ideas, such as how to cook and eat healthy foods, that she practices with her family, and she has learned new ways to expand her business. Despite her 74 years, **Victoria** says, the project has helped her to stay active and never stop learning.

Women from all groups have noticed changes in each other, most notably increases in animation, confidence, positivity, and thoughtfulness.

The Microloan Project aims to provide Guatemalan women opportunities to grow in self-esteem, hope, and freedom, and to help them develop economic resources for themselves and their families. It is exciting and encouraging to know that they have come to perceive and value these opportunities for themselves. We give thanks for all those who pray for and contribute to the ongoing mission.

February 2019 Microloan Trip to Guatemala

Eight women from the Presbytery of Western North Carolina will have the opportunity to see the Microloan Project firsthand on a February 4-11, 2019 trip to Guatemala. Please keep them in your prayers as they prepare for and travel to Guatemala, meet with ADEHGUÁ staff and the microloan groups.



Trip participants from left:
Amanda Martin, Terri Hendrix,
Susan Maveety, Mimi Michael,
Mary Louise Forsythe, Lil
Lanier, Ellen Dozier and Gloria
Hickson.

PEACE AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE REPORT

January, 2019

The Peace and Justice Table today includes the following free material:

- ❖ Forms for grants request from the Global Witness and Peacemaking Offering
- ❖ About Climate Change
- ❖ On becoming an Earth Care Congregation
- ❖ Earth friendly Ideas for Churches and Homes
- ❖ Samples of the curriculum offered by Reclaiming Jesus



The Committee would like to identify a **contact person** from each church as a way of encouraging initiatives in the areas of mission and justice and disseminating information directly to the congregations. If your church has such a person or a committee, please communicate that to the Peace and Justice Committee.

Beginning in January the Peace and Justice Table will become the **Outreach & Mission Development Table**. Included at that location will be information about the activities and needed forms, etc. of the Hunger, Mission, and Peace and Justice Committees.

Unity Presbyterian Church in Denver, NC will be featured at the January meeting. Included in their presentation will be a history of their very helpful process as they developed service in the areas of peace and justice as well as Earth care.

We will continue featuring one church at each meeting of presbytery. So far we have heard from First Presbyterian, Asheville; Dulatown Presbyterian, Montreat Presbyterian. If you would like to be the focus of one of the meetings, please let Billy Robinson know.

The Peace and Justice Committee wants to encourage other committees to consider using **ZOOM** for some of your meetings. ZOOM is a video conferences system that has worked well for us this past year. In addition to making it possible for more members to "attend" meetings, it reduces the carbon footprint we create each time we drive our cars.

Mission at Unity Presbyterian Church: Report to the Presbytery of Western North Carolina

January 26, 2019

(This is a much expanded version of the oral presentation being given today)

MISSION OVERVIEW

This report was written by Jay Sloan and his colleagues. Jay is the Elder for Mission at Unity Presbyterian Church in Denver, and the Chair of Unity's Mission Team.

That Team has two committees: *Compassion, Peace, & Justice* and *Earth Care*. Present are the chairpersons of those committees ... Sam Sipes and Bee Manship. Jay will provide a little historical perspective, and they will highlight activities.

Like many churches in the Presbytery, Unity has long had a Mission Team. It approves and directs a large number of projects – such as

- Hands on support to “Hesed House,” a shelter for the homeless in Lincoln County.
- A “Construction Crew” that performs major house repairs and builds needed structures for people ill or infirm.
- And numerous support programs for children and adults in crisis.

It also has developed mission relationships In Guatemala, Kenya, Nigeria, and, most recently, Haiti.

In 2008, the Mission Team added a “Coordinator for Peacemaking.”

And in 2009, our Session signed the PCUSA “*Commitment To Peacemaking*.” A series of awareness events followed.

In 2012, PCUSA issued an invitation to all churches to participate in a discernment process focused on updating the Presbyterian Church’s understanding of peacemaking in the modern era.

Unity accepted the invitation. 13 volunteers signed up to participate. For 6 months, we pondered in detail and prayed on the issues and questions that Louisville posed. We followed the recommended discernment process. At the conclusion, we sent a report to PCUSA (copy to the Presbytery).

The most immediate outcome, for us, was to create a “Peacemaking Committee.” Shortly thereafter, we changed its name to Compassion, Peace, and Justice Committee in order to broaden our focus and more easily convey that to others.

One of its first actions was to self-facilitate through the PCUSA publication, “*Steps Along the Way*.” It discusses key social justice issues that peacemakers should be aware of. We did this to help each member discern his or her own calling by asking: What issues did someone feel a passion for or call from God to pursue?

We then developed our “*Mission, Vision, and Goals*” document. It defines our purpose and outlines how we operate. Essentially, each individual is encouraged to identify with an issue (already on the table or one they want to bring in, something new, something they are passionate about.) They then take accountability to:

- either lead or support the development of knowledge about it
- share that knowledge

- lead in designing and implementing projects that encourage involvement by the congregation to pursue goals that respond to what we discern as God's calls.

Early on, we placed a heavy priority on improving Interfaith Relations in and near our community... seeing, sadly, hostility arising out of ignorance, fear and disrespect of others who are different from us. We undertook special education to better recognize our own blind spots, deal with fake news, and break through racial barriers.

We created an Earth Care Committee to help us make peace with God's earth.

COMPASSION, PEACE, & JUSTICE:

Samantha (Sam) Sipes is the Chair of Unity Presbyterian's Compassion, Peace and Justice Committee.

Early on we put a priority on Interfaith Relations, starting with a focus on **Islam**. The Muslim community continues to be a target of prejudice and hate crimes.

At the outset, we invited a professor from Davidson College – an internationally acclaimed expert on Islam -- to dialogue with us about the religion and culture.

We were eager to interact directly with Muslims because in our church most people had strong opinions about Muslims but had never met any nor been in a mosque. The problem was we didn't know any Muslims. And there are no mosques in Lincoln County.

Sam and her husband have a good friend very active in promoting interfaith harmony in South Carolina at the state level. He introduced us to Imam Omar Shaheed who is a leader in interfaith programs in South Carolina.

Four of us traveled to South Carolina to meet Imam Omar. He indeed turned out to be a man of peace! We explained that we wanted to improve the level of understanding of Islam in our church. He agreed to help us. We immediately began mapping out a strategy.

We decided we would first hold an information session at a private home. Members of our committee and invited guests would have the opportunity to meet and listen to Omar. Would he be effective if speaking to the larger congregation? We wanted to be sure this would be a positive, peace-oriented occasion. The session went exceedingly well, and we immediately moved forward.

Omar had a good friend and colleague who is a longtime Imam of a mosque in Charlotte. Our small group traveled again, this time to Charlotte to meet with that Imam and attend one of the mosque's worship services.

In February, 2017, we held an educational event in our church featuring the two Imams. One hundred people attended. About 30 of them were Muslims from the Charlotte mosque. We made sure each table had both Muslims and Christians seated together.

The lectures focused on the similarities between Islam and Christianity. Dinner was served, and a healthy dialogue took place. We agreed to visit each other and stay in touch. Several Unity members developed relationships and to this day correspond. Some have attended cultural events at the mosque. We have a relationship of trust.

Following this achievement, we located the closest **synagogue**, which happens to be in Davidson ... in a building that previously served as a Presbyterian church! We met with the rabbi and visited one of their Friday evening services. We currently are setting up a time when our committee will join in baking

Challah bread, as just one way of enriching our relationship. The rabbi has agreed to address one of our Bible study classes in the coming year.

All of that was good. But in the process we realized just how few Muslims and Jews there are in our county.

There are, however, many **African-Americans** – and we don't know them all that well. Not many of us have inter-racial friendships. We pass each other daily, maybe say hello, but rarely much more. Too few of us work intentionally to become better neighbors.

We decided to launch a “Building Bridges to Racial Unity” initiative. We identified key African-American leaders in our part of the county and invited them to sit down with us as fellow Christians and commit to work at becoming better neighbors.

Our first meeting took place in March of this year. 15 African-American leaders and 15 members of the Compassion, Peace, & Justice Committee met. Our goal was simply to listen to their stories about life in Lincoln County. What do they like? What do they not like? What are their hopes and aspirations? **We had to work at instilling within ourselves the discipline to listen well.**

It was a moving experience. Many insights were revealed and perceptions changed. At our second meeting in May, we agreed to organize an inter-church gospel concert at Unity – and I'm happy to report that took place last week!

We are working on establishing a program in which small, inter-racial groups will meet periodically to break bread over a six-month period. We are also working toward getting the youth groups at our church and five local African-American churches to engage together in a community service project.

This past July, our Committee took a **bus tour of sites of historical significance to the African-American community** in our part of the county. Our guide was an unofficial, local historian, an African-American. We visited old cemeteries dating back to the days of slavery, African-American church meeting houses and camps, and significant pieces of real estate. Many stories not written down anywhere were shared. We learned a lot. A bridge of understanding and trust is emerging.

Those interfaith and interracial experiences have been meaningful for our church. But they are not all that we have done. Here are some of things we have organized:

- provided training on “blind spots” and “fake news,”
- sent several members to an anti-racism workshop in Greensboro,
- facilitated book discussions on issues relevant to our goals ... such as White Rage and Between the World and Me,
- designed and conducted a major Peacemaking worship service,
- planted “Peace Poles” on our campus as well as other points of interest such as Camp Grier and the Cherokee Nation,
- hosted the International Peacemaker from South Sudan for a weekend last year.

Earth Care:

Bee Manship is the Chair of Unity Presbyterian's Earth Care Committee which began as an offshoot of the Compassion, Peace and Justice Committee. After discussing an article entitled “Challenging Consumption” from the Presbyterian study guide: *Steps Along the Way: Living as Peacemakers in a Violent World*, I was inspired to suggest that Unity begin a composting initiative.

We are a church that enjoys eating together so **composting** would be a logical first step for our church to take toward doing something for the environment.

By searching on the Web PCUSA'S policy on environmental action, I discovered the Earth Care Congregation application and the process which began in 2015. We have earned designations for three consecutive years as an **Earth Care Congregation**.

Since our initial naming as an Earth Care Congregation, the Earth Care Committee has undertaken church recycling of plastics, paper, aluminum, and printer ink cartridges, as well as the evaluation of the energy efficiency of its facilities, and the planting of a **community garden**.

We grow vegetables for families who live in the county's home for victims of domestic abuse, and we have our children and youth partnering with the local "Keep Lincoln County Beautiful" group to clean a nearby park.

We have also begun using **Direct Trade Coffee** and have sold organic cotton, "sweat shop free" t-shirts.

Our initiative this year is to plant a "**pollinator garden**" on the church campus to help the bees and other pollinators that are essential to the growing of flowers and food. We also hope to use the garden as a tool to help the youngsters in our preschool and Sunday school understand the importance of these critters and to help plant and maintain the garden.

Each year brings new ideas and projects for us as we continue to look for ways to care for God's earth.