Global Prayer and Service Committee Annual Report 2023

GPS’s mission is to “Share God’s love in our local community and the world.”

Cards

GPS sends cards to folks who are having significant life events. These cards may be for illness, birthdays, bereavement, etc. If you know of someone who is having a significant life event, please contact someone on GPS so we can send a card. Special thank you to Linda Leavenworth for sending most of the cards!

Meal Organization

When there are people who are having a medical issue, it is helpful to have an evening meal brought in. The GPS committee helped to organize meals for some families in our congregation. It was managed using an online signup so people could see what food the family has had so it’s not duplicated. Thank you to everyone who provided meals; it really helped those families in need get through a difficult time.

Coffee Hour Organization

During the summer, we made sign-up sheets available for people to provide refreshments for “coffee on the lawn” before worship. Then, in the fall, we started back with regular coffee hour after worship in the vestry. GPS provides coffee, tea, cream, etc. and volunteers can bring in snacks and take care of prep and cleanup. It has been great to be able to be together during this time.

Christmas Gifts for Needy Families

This year at Christmas time, members of the United Parish purchased gifts and gift cards for needy families in Lunenburg through the school. This allowed children in struggling families to receive Christmas gifts. Thank you to everyone who donated, to Carol Poladian for organizing.

Home Bound

GPS has developed a list of people that are homebound so that other members can call or visit. The team is working on a process for connecting those who want to call or visit with those who want it.

North Star Family Services

North Star Family Services provides stable housing, comprehensive services and advocacy for families in need of support. North Star serves homeless families with children and utilizes volunteers from local congregations who provide an even meal for guest families at the shelter.

The United Parish continues to be a host congregation. Approximately every 13 weeks we are responsible for a weekly rotation. During our host week volunteers prepare an evening meal for approximately 15 people and we provide staples such as milk, lunch foods and paper products needed for the week. And as a host congregation we provide financial support to pay for program expenses

Thank you so much to everyone who volunteered and special thanks to Cindy Campbell for her hard work and loving dedication to organizing volunteers and food at the shelter.

Also, in 2023, North Star Family Services is working to start a new program called Journey Home which include a new 15 Unit supportive housing program. This will be 15 apartments for qualifying families who will also receive assistance similar to families at the North Star emergency shelter. The United Parish agreed to donate $20k over the next 4 years to support the building of this new program. North Star will be breaking ground on the new apartments sometime in early 2024.

North Central Massachusetts Faith Based Community Coalition

Although not organized through GPS, several members of the United Parish have been volunteering to prepare meals for the homeless in Fitchburg. Our volunteers prepare and distribute a hot meal and bag lunch for approximate 125 people. Food insecurity is a big problem; this ministry is one way that we can provide hope to those who don’t have food.

Thank you to all the members of the GPS committee for their tireless efforts in 2023: Linda Leavenworth, Carol Poladian, Lin Vickery, Cindy Campbell, Bernadette Roop, Deb Anderson, Cindy Jobin, Rev. Ernie Farrar and Theresa Werme. And thank you to everyone who donated their precious time and financial resources to share God’s love in our community and throughout the world.

Respectfully Submitted

Adam Weber