

# Compassion in Action



*You can help during the Coronavirus crisis!*

## Missions Connections During the Coronavirus Crisis

As we continue to acclimate to these days of “social isolation,” many of us continue to think about ways we can continue to care for our neighbors who are most vulnerable. Several Watts Streeters are in contact with our missions partners in the community and will continue to provide updates on how we can participate in missions work. To explore opportunities that we as a church are currently addressing, visit the WSBC website:

<http://wattsstreet.org/caring-for-our-neighbors-during-covid-19/>

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## Watts Street Provides Emergency Funds for Walltown Food Pantry

The Walltown Food Pantry has been overwhelmed with requests for groceries and sanitation supplies during the Coronavirus crisis. In April, the Missions Committee agreed to provide \$550 in emergency funds for the purchase of spaghetti sauce, pasta noodles, and canned meat for 130 neighbors in Walltown. Volunteers had to shop in several grocery stores to acquire items that were in short supply.

A few weeks later, the Pantry Coordinator Silvia Hayes-Belcher wrote to WSBC: “I just got an email from our accountant. Our food budget is depleted, and we still have two months left in our fiscal year. Could you please see if your church can help? We are serving an increasing number of families who have been economically impacted by COVID-19...”

Watts Street was immediately able to provide ten \$50 gift cards so volunteers could shop for hard to find items including masks, sanitizers, toilet paper, etc. The Missions Committee agreed to send a check for \$1,000 which had been budgeted for the Walltown Neighborhood Ministry.

Congregation members can individually support the Walltown Pantry by purchasing gift cards from the following food sources: Dollar General, Dollar Tree, Harris-Teeter, and Walmart. The gift cards should be sent to St. John’s Missionary Baptist Church, 917 Onslow St., Durham, NC 27705. If you have questions, contact Silvia Hayes-Belcher, Pantry Coordinator, stjohsba1@frontier.com or 919-286-0332 Ext. 20.

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## Meals on Wheels Check-In Calls

Every Wednesday between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Jeanne and I make phone calls to seventeen Meals on Wheels of Durham clients to check on their current needs and remind them to receive the five frozen meals and fruit delivered each Monday. One couple asked us for toilet paper. Another senior said his caregiver needed a mask. An elderly man living alone asked for a special delivery of food for his dog.

Our personal experience is that most Meals on Wheels recipients greatly appreciate our calls even though direct social contact isn't possible. We also connect with family and caregivers. One caregiver has an essential maintenance job at Duke while hospice workers care for his mother. Another caregiver shared that he had just returned from his mother's funeral service.

Meals on Wheels of Durham still needs volunteers to pack meals (using social distancing) and make deliveries. Volunteers can support

COVID-19 relief efforts by filling out an application at [www.mowdurham.org/volunteer](http://www.mowdurham.org/volunteer). MOW also needs drivers every Monday. Every week, 136 volunteers pack and deliver 2,616 meals to 446 clients.

You can also help in other ways - making phone calls, writing a card for a senior, and donating items from the Amazon wish list. Go to [mowdurham.org](http://mowdurham.org) to donate. By selecting COVID-19, funds will go to the current efforts.

Bob and Jeanne Kruhm



*“Every week, 136 volunteers pack and deliver 2,616 meals to 446 clients.”*

## Join Durham CAN Listening Sessions by Zoom

Watts Streeters are invited to join Durham CAN (Congregations, Associations, Neighborhoods) listening session training by Zoom. The listening sessions are designed to identify stories and issues that reflect what participants are concerned about and strengthen relationships through shared stories and histories. Participants can attend one or more Zoom video sessions at 5:00 p.m. on June 2, June 9, June 16, June 23, and June 30, 5:00. Register in advance at:

[https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJcpd-6gqzgsG9IcVcO2GkBf\\_Xgxk3ulfPNK](https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJcpd-6gqzgsG9IcVcO2GkBf_Xgxk3ulfPNK)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. Contact Bob Kruhm at [rkruhm@nc.rr.com](mailto:rkruhm@nc.rr.com) for details.

*“...strengthen relationships through shared stories and histories.”*

*“This pandemic ... has polished the lens through which we see that the need to overcome systemic racism, poverty, ecological devastation, and the war movement is needed more than ever.”*

## Poor People’s Assembly Goes Digital!

We were going to be prepared this year. Our plans were to attend the Poor People’s March in Washington on Saturday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, as we had in 2018. That was our first experience at a Washington March, and I did not have what I needed to make the experience complete. So, this year, I was going to make sure I took a camping stool so I could sit down, and not only a large bottle of water, but some snacks so I would not get so hungry during the long, but exciting, series of speeches before the actual march.

Those plans were dissolved by our world being turned upside down by the Covid-19 virus. I am disappointed that Ralph and I and a few others from Watts Street will not be going to Washington, a city that always invigorates me. But I will have my choice of comfortable places to sit, a pantry with snacks, and AC if it is a hot day, for the march will be digital. I can attend easily. You can attend easily with

choices of times to tune in. You can watch on Saturday, June 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. or 6:00 p.m. and again on Sunday, the 21<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 p.m. From the comfort of our own homes, we can be a part of The Poor People’s Campaign: A Call to Moral Justice, a “gathering of poor and low-wealth people, moral and religious leaders, advocates and people of conscience.”

This pandemic, and other world news lost in the crisis, has polished the lens through which we see that the need to overcome systemic racism, poverty, ecological devastation, and the war movement is needed more than ever. I encourage you to pick a time, sit down in a comfortable chair with a water bottle and snack, and watch as stories are told, issues are raised, and the goodness of concerned people is revealed. At the same time, count your blessings, and thank God for those blessings.

To begin, go to [www.june2020.org](http://www.june2020.org) to let them know you will be joining.

Emily McCoy  
Peace and Reconciliation  
Mission Group

**MASS POOR PEOPLE’S ASSEMBLY & MORAL MARCH ON WASHINGTON IS GOING DIGITAL!**  
**JUNE 20, 2020**  
[www.June2020.org](http://www.June2020.org)

FIGHT POVERTY NOT POOR

WE ARE RISING

REPAIRERS OF THE BREACH

Poor People’s Campaign

A NATIONAL CALL for MORAL REVIVAL

KAIROS THE CENTER FOR RELIGIOUS, RIGHTS, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

## WSBC Continues to Provide Meals for Urban Ministries

For over 15 years, WSBC has prepared and served a monthly dinner at Urban Ministries for 200 people. When social distancing measures went into place in March, it happened during the week that we were scheduled for our UM meal. They needed the meals in to-go boxes since they couldn't host large numbers of people in their dining area. We quickly adapted and worked out of the WSBC kitchen and fellowship hall to provide more room for our volunteers to work at a safe distance. We also worked with only five volunteers to help us stay well-spaced. It was a bit different to load all those individual food containers into cars and deliver them to Urban Ministries, but we made it work!

We had several more volunteers interested in helping in April, and the Missions Committee wanted to provide an opportunity for people to be involved with missions work from their homes. So, we restarted the Casserole Ministry to deliver an extra monthly meal for Urban Ministries. In May, we delivered 18 casseroles and nine cakes, and we plan to do the Casserole Ministry again.

Urban Ministries has incurred many additional expenses due to the pandemic. Every meal must be served in a to-go container with an individual bottle of water or juice,

and their shelter clients have moved into a hotel to allow for more social distancing. UM is delivering all the meals to the hotel for their clients. We will continue to prepare a monthly meal in our fellowship hall using five volunteers for prep and three cake bakers. And look for emails on how you can participate as we continue the Casserole Ministry! For more ways to support Urban Ministries, visit their web site at [www.umdurham.org](http://www.umdurham.org).

Greg Palmer  
Missions Committee Chair  
[senorpalmer@gmail.com](mailto:senorpalmer@gmail.com)

*Monthly meals  
and casseroles  
for Urban  
Ministries!*



*The Casserole Ministry is reactivated! Watch for opportunities to participate.*

## Watts Street Responds to Senior Hunger Needs

Watts Street partnered with End Hunger Durham, Durham Congregations in Action, Durham City and County, United Way, Duke Health/Duke University, and four local caterers to initiate a program providing weekly meals to over 900 low-income seniors who are food insecure and at increased health risk during this pandemic.

In April, the Missions Committee authorized \$1,125 from the Missions budget to provide meals for 75 at-risk seniors living in the Preiss-Steele apartments. Preiss-Steele is an underserved senior public housing community where Bob and Jeanne Kruhm have been participating in “listening sessions” as part of the Senior Food and Nutrition Committee of the Durham Partnership for Seniors.

Watts Street also encouraged three other local congregations to join this effort. Thanks to the participation of these congregations, a \$7,500 donation from United Way, and fund-raising by local caterers, the program has been expanded to seventeen senior resident sites, delivering over 12,000 meals to 1,016 seniors. The nutritious meals

are prepared and delivered by local caterers who are committed to social distancing and strict sanitation procedures. Preparing and delivering each three-meal kit costs \$17. Funds raised for these meals also puts money back into the community by supporting the catering businesses.

Betsy Crites, Co-Coordinator of End Hunger Durham, said, “The residents at Preiss Steele LOVED the meals, were ecstatic, and pleased with how easy the handoff went. Gretchen, a resident at Preiss Steele said the meals were wonderful, and she and her fellow residents couldn’t be happier.” Ms. Crites also reported a real problem in the shortage of essentials like toilet paper. Some people are donating part of their government stimulus checks to help cover this shortage.

You can help by donating at [www.endhungerdurham.org](http://www.endhungerdurham.org) or by sending a check marked for Senior Meals Delivery to Durham Congregations in Action, c/o Senior Meals, 504 W. Chapel Hill Street, Durham, N.C. 27701-3102.

Bob Kruhm  
Missions Committee

*“...seventeen senior resident sites, delivering over 12,000 meals to 1,016 seniors...”*

## Durham CAN and RCND Partner to Aid Decarceration

The Durham CAN Criminal Justice Action Team and the Religious Coalition for a Nonviolent Durham (RCND) have been leading efforts focused on decarceration as an approach to preventing the spread of COVID-19 among the state’s prison populations.

Collaboration between RCND, Durham CAN and the Durham County District Attorney has permitted 15 individuals who are over the age of 65, have pre-existing health conditions, and who have served 75% or more of their sentence (for low-level crimes), to receive modifications to their sentences and be released.

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## Durham CAN and RCND Partner to Aid Decarceration (continued from page 5)

Recently, several Watts Street members helped a 72-year-old newly-released man who was quarantined for 14 days in Durham after being released from the Neuse Correctional Institution in Goldsboro. The Neuse Correctional Institution is the site of one of the largest outbreaks in the nation; over 460 inmates have tested positive and three have died in the outbreak. Watts Street members provided four non-contact meals by clicking on a Meal Train link. Another Watts Street member donated pants, shirts, and shoes.

RCND is supporting newly released individuals, with a wide range of services. The challenges are enormous: early release individuals who have no home plan; partners who have been working but have lost their jobs and are struggling as they try to file for unemployment; individuals with a home plan but whose families have lost employment and now those returning citizens are a major financial drain. A major effort is to address issues of food insecurity.

RCND is providing \$50 grocery store gift cards each week to partners and friends in need. Watts Street members can help by providing grocery gift cards and financial support to the RCND COVID-19 Relief Fund by visiting <https://nonviolentdurham.org/donate/>

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## Creation Care Ministry

Spending more time at home? Getting the urge to clean out? *Decluttering can be daunting but living a minimalist existence is life-changing.* This activity is a good one to engage all ages. Remember that WSBC sponsors a Green Zone bin for your well-worn clothing, accessories, linens, and shoes in the Urban Street parking lot by the Mission House. Donate your items (see picture guide below) that will be used by second-hand markets and producers to make new products; 45 % of clothing is resold and reused (and recycled again), 20% is broken down into fibers and turned into new products like insulation; and 30% is cut into industrial wiping cloths. Emily McCoy who recently cleaned out and moved to a new residence said, “I love the fact that they will take items with rips or stains that I shouldn’t take to thrift stores and burden them with my donations that are unusable.”



We will divert waste from the landfill and reduce greenhouse gas emissions! A cleaner, healthier world is possible for us and for our children.



## Ways to Donate:

Amazon wish list – ship donated items directly to FMF

[https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/37YRMS5OBSV8O?ref\\_=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/37YRMS5OBSV8O?ref_=wl_share)

Provide financial support

<https://www.classy.org/give/281805/#!/donation/checkout>

## May/June Mission Baskets

Contact Clark Godfrey ([clarkgodfrey820@gmail.com](mailto:clarkgodfrey820@gmail.com), 919-602-4829)

## Families Moving Forward

During these times of uncertainty, Families Moving Forward (FMF) is more reliant on financial contributions to help the families they serve stay fed and housed. A large number of the parents, both in the shelter and in the aftercare program, have lost their employment, and the needs of the children have become greater without the support of schools and daycares. FMF made the decision not to move their guests to hotels – a decision that requires extra precautions to ensure everyone’s safety at the shelter. All kitchens are closed, and the FMF staff is working with Love and Nourish, a local initiative to provide family style meals for local communities, to provide three meals a day for shelter guests. This is made possible through individual giving from community partners and neighbors. And extra care is also required for aftercare families due to the COVID19 crisis. FMF has established a Pay It Forward campaign to encourage donations which could include all or part of the federal government stimulus checks, especially from families who are still working and making ends meet. If you would like to help FMF support the families in their care, please go to the websites listed in the Mission Baskets article above. For more information about FMF, contact Stuart Wells at [stuart.wells@duke.edu](mailto:stuart.wells@duke.edu)

## Raising Chickens and Helping Neighbors

*This is a story from Olivia McDaniel, a seventh grader and member of the WSBC Youth Group.*

My day with the chickens starts with letting them out for the day. Several times a week we refill the food and water for the chickens, which takes 30-45 minutes. In the winter, we have to get up early and break the ice on their water containers so that they have access to water. Before we go to bed, we shut our chickens in to protect them from predators, and we gather the eggs.

We sell the eggs to friends and community members for \$4.00 per dozen. Some of the community members who have been buying eggs from us for several years are recent immigrants, many from Morocco and also Mexico. They like to buy eggs directly from a farmer because it makes them feel closer to their food, and that is what they did before they moved to the US. We donate a lot of the proceeds to food security projects both locally and internationally.

*"I use the money this way to help people who don't or can't get heard when they need help".*

My Mom suggested sponsoring a family at Merrick Moore Elementary. At first, I was a little hesitant because I didn't know if the money was going to make a big impact, and I knew the same amount of money would make a big difference in Guatemala. But we decided Merrick Moore was a good choice.

I use the money this way to help people who don't or can't get heard when they need help.



*"Where every member is a minister"*



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**Missions Committee:** 2019-2020 Missions Committee Members include: Greg Palmer, Chair, Elizabeth Forshay, Clark Godfrey, Bob Kruhm, Laura Lee, Joy Turner, Dan Winn, Lloyd Patillo, Karen Kimel-Scott, Henry Koonce. Please feel free to contact any of the members for more information about Watts Street's Missions.