

April 2021

To the members of the Congregational United Church of Christ, Iowa City

As you know, during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic the Mission Board and the Church Council have made significant gifts to organizations such as the CommUnity Food Pantry, the CRC Common Fund, Shelter House, Table to Table, the Free Lunch Program, the Domestic Violence Intervention Program (DVIP), the Center for Worker Justice, Inside Out, Free Medical Clinic and United Action for Youth. As additional funds become available, we will continue giving on behalf of the congregation, doing research to determine which local agencies are in greatest need.

As we did a year ago, the Mission Board is inviting church members to donate some or all of their COVID-19 Relief Checks (stimulus checks) to local agencies which can get this money to individuals with immediate needs, some of whom don't qualify for relief checks. Many in our congregation will need to keep their relief checks just to make ends meet through the continuing crisis, but many in our congregation are still receiving their regular income and may actually have fewer expenses than usual.

The Mission Board recommends you consider donations to:

Center for Worker Justice, From My Home to Yours

CWJ's goal is to pass along payments of \$400-\$600 per family to local community members in crisis, starting with those who are ineligible for any government assistance. CWJ will distribute donations directly to local families who need them, with oversight from a committee of local leaders. 00% of the funds raised through this campaign are going directly to families.

Online donations: <https://cwjiowa.salsalabs.org/FromMyHometoYours/index.html>

Send checks to: CWJ From My Home to Yours; 1556 1st Avenue # C; Iowa City, IA 52240

CommUnity Food Pantry

Residents of Johnson County, IA can receive grocery assistance once per week. Pre-made bags of food are available. Food delivery is now available to anyone living in Johnson County who needs food but cannot access other resources due to COVID-19.

Online donations: <https://builtbycommunity.org/donate/>

Send checks to: CommUnity; 1121 Gilbert Court; Iowa City IA 52240-4528

Domestic Violence Intervention Program (DVIP)

DVIP has created multiple virtual offices for staff. Clients who seek housing assistance are given funds one time in a fiscal year due to their Federal and State grant stipulations. Providing additional temporary housing funds and keeping their shelter fully functional has put a large strain on their resources, which would have lasted until July 1st. It is likely that some families in estranged situations will not have access to the stimulus checks being deposited in their name.

Online donations: https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/j-jHk7OrRx9SpY8cckh2Q

Send checks to: Domestic Violence Intervention Program; 1105 S. Gilbert Court, Suite 300; Iowa City, IA 52240

Free Medical Clinic

From the Free Medical Clinic Website: The Iowa City Free Clinic was established in 1971 by a group of people who were all concerned about the high cost of health care. They believed that access to health care was a basic human right and that everyone – regardless of their ability to pay – should receive needed care. Today, the clinic holds 6 medical clinics

per week and from 2-5 weekly dental clinics. Patients receive treatment for acute and chronic diseases, as well as specialty care and preventive care. A small staff and over 250 volunteers from a wide range of disciplines provide comprehensive care for hundreds of people in need every month. Donate through the donate button on the website: <https://freemedicalclinic.org/give-money/>

Inside Out Reentry

Inside Out Reentry Community is based in Iowa City and serves people returning to Johnson County after incarceration. They are having many more returning citizens right now due to early “outs” because of COVID-19. They need funds for health care packets, simple items like deodorant and toothpaste, etc., more than ever. Also, obviously jobs are in short supply for previously incarcerated persons.

Online donations: <https://www.insideoutreentry.com/donate/>

Send checks to: Inside Out; 500 N. Clinton St.; Iowa City, IA 52245

Open Heartland

OPEN Heartland is a grassroots, community based initiative celebrating the richness and strength of our diverse community through fostering inclusivity, building relationships and reaffirming our shared humanity. Open Heartland serves over 175 Latino families (328 children) from the Iowa City area, supporting them as they negotiate the challenges of building their new lives in our community. Programs and activities listed on their Facebook site include tutoring, sewing classes, English classes, Mobile health clinic, Online schooling, and basics (food, clothes, etc.) The work of Open Heartland, a 501(c)3 nonprofit, is supported by local donations and grants. Send checks to P.O. Box 3357, Iowa City, IA 52244.

Shelter House

Shelter House supports and advances their mission to provide safe shelter and help people improve the quality of their lives as they move beyond homelessness. In 2020 the Shelter House role was expanded to include managing relief checks for rent and eviction prevention throughout Johnson County.

Online donations: <https://shelterhouseiowa.org/donate/>

Send checks to: Shelter House; PO Box 3146; Iowa City, IA 52244-3146

These seven agencies are not an exhaustive list of worthy local agencies serving individuals in Johnson County during the pandemic. These agencies were selected based on research undertaken by the Mission Board, but congregational members should make decisions based on their broad experience of service agencies in the area.

The Mission Board considered asking church members to funnel this money through the church (like we typically do with the Alternative Giving bazaar at Christmas). In order to get this relief money into the community as soon as possible we are hoping you will make donations directly to these agencies rather than sending the money to the church.

Thank you in advance for your generosity and compassion,

Congregational United Church of Christ Mission Board

Laurie Stunz

Kyle Flippo

Paula Forest

Chuck Dayton

Donna Hirst

Bruce Reynolds

Hope Spragg

Jane Kinney

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