

Friendship United Methodist Women Social Justice

The UMW group for Social Justice here at Friendship Church while in quarantine and through the pandemic never stopped with their mission of turning faith, hope and love into action! We have been engaged in mission projects while trying to make lives better for the people affected by the pandemic.

Equal Exchange and UMCOR Coffee Project

During this year we have continued selling our Equal Exchange fairly traded products to support small scale farmers around the world. With our proceeds we support our UMW mission projects in our church, community and around the world!

Southwest Suburban Immigrant Project (SSIP)

In February we scheduled a citizenship workshop to be held at our church in the spring. We work closely with the Southwest Suburban Immigrant Project, housed here in Bolingbrook, in many ways. We have hosted several citizenship workshops and training sessions in the past few years which provides immigrants, ready to start their journey to become a United States citizen, the very first step toward that goal! The pandemic and quarantine put our workshop on hold for now but will be rescheduled as soon as possible!

Valley View School District

We partner with our community Valley View School district through the family resource center. We have a group of women who go weekly to help sort donated items, organize, make deliveries and help the site coordinator in any way we are needed! The resource center supports homeless children and families in the school district while they are on their path back to stability in their lives.

Micro Pantry

We had already made plans to build and stock a micro pantry right at our front door at Friendship Church. The micro pantry motto is...."Take what you need. Leave what you can". It is part of the micropantries.org group in the western suburbs. Our pantry was the 4th one in Bolingbrook and 1st one on the east side. During the first part of the quarantine our pantry was built and ready to be opened to for service on May 10th. The UMW team members brought the first food items, stocked it and it was ready for use! WE have a team of 6 UMW members who take turns daily managing the pantry. Our purpose is to provide immediate access for food 24/7 all year long for needful families in our surrounding community. The pantry is continuously stocked, not just by our church members, but also from members of our community and beyond. It is a community project and we are all in this together to make this much needed outreach possible.

Racism and Black Lives Matter

During the summer and fall when the Black Lives Matter protests began our hearts were broken with the death of George Floyd and others. We struggled with what we could do to take action within our UMW. In the late summer our two UMW leaders (Social Life and Social Justice) began what we called Patio Chats. We invited a small group of diverse women from our church to meet on my outdoor patio with social distancing and face masks to just talk. Our purpose was to hopefully build deeper relationships and to talk about experiences in our own lives with racism. The discussions were heart felt and we began our journey to try to affect positive change in our quest to become anti-racist. We decided to continue our chats and to reach out (when it is safe to do) to women's groups from other diverse churches in our community and have relationship building conversations with them!

Senior Lunches and Shut-Ins!

At Friendship Church we have traditionally for many years had a home cooked senior lunch following the senior Bible study with our pastor the third Thursday of each month. During the pandemic we have not been able to have this ministry at the church. Beginning the third Thursday of November this year, we will now pack up lunches, include a decoration or favor, and include an inspirational message from our pastor with the lunch each month. We will then deliver a lunch to each one of our senior members and reach out to include other seniors in our community. We want our seniors to know just how much we care about them and miss seeing them!

Thanksgiving Dinner baskets and Christmas presents!

Our combined UMW will again raise money from our congregation, contribute food and give gift cards to two needful families from our community school district. We work closely with our school district and this is an annual project for us. We are happy to be able to open our hearts and help to make these two holidays a bit happier for our two families! We will also sponsor a children's mitten tree to gather warm hats, mittens, scarves etc. for our school district children to keep them warm during the winter months!

Donations!

~We pledge money to the district UMW and global UMW each year. Our outreach goes beyond our local church and community.

~ We donated money to our Bishop's Tanzania Appeal in October.

Summary

Our UMW continues to be engaged and organized for mission. We are advocates for justice and we continuously want to grow in faith and deepen our relationships with Christ! Most of all we will turn faith, hope and love into action as we as UMW are called to do!!