

Scripture Lessons:

Psalm 71:1-6

¹ In you, O LORD, I take refuge; let me never be put to shame.

² In your righteousness deliver me and rescue me; incline your ear to me and save me.

³ Be to me a rock of refuge, a strong fortress, for you are my rock and my fortress.

⁴ Rescue me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of the unjust and cruel.

⁵ For you, O Lord, are my hope, my trust, O LORD, from my youth.

⁶ Upon you I have leaned from my birth; it was you who took me from my mother's womb. My praise is continually of you.

Jeremiah 6:16

¹⁶ "This says our God

Stand at the crossroads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way lies; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls."

Jeremiah 7:1-7

¹ The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: ² Stand in the gate of the Lord's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the Lord, all you people of Judah, you that enter these gates to worship the Lord. ³ Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Amend your ways and your doings, and let me dwell with you in this place. ⁴ Do not trust in these deceptive words: "This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord." ⁵ For if you truly amend your ways and your doings, if you truly act justly one with another, ⁶ if you do not oppress the outsider, the orphan, and the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own hurt, ⁷ then I will dwell with you in this place, in the land of your ancestors forever and ever."

Stewardship Message

My name is Susan Beeman and I have served on the Board of Missions for the last four years. My husband Harvey and I retired to this area after living for forty years and raising our family in another southeastern CT town. We have been members of several different churches and we were looking locally for a church that would allow us to contribute, develop and grow in the current stage of our spiritual journey. We were so fortunate to have found FCCOL. The sermons seem to speak to us every week and help us to handle all the crises that occur in our world, nation, state, and personal lives. This church challenged us to use our talents to translate the expectations of a spiritual life into actions. There are opportunities to volunteer and give back in so many different arenas.

The Board of Missions consists of a committed group of members, (Jane Marolda, Nancy Mol, Julie Kuja, Matthew Muehl-Miller, Lee Whitaker, Stephanie Kenny, Charlie Hosley, and me) with the assistance of Carleen, our clergy rep, and Deb Heminway, our Board of Deacons rep, who meet and distribute funds that are generously provided by the congregation to meet the needs of those less fortunate.

The Board has been very mindful of our additional responsibilities during the Covid pandemic and has worked hard to continue to support both our local partners and our long term domestic and international partners. The Board awarded local benevolences equaling over \$29,000.00 to organizations such as the New London Soup Kitchen, Thames River Family Housing, Martin House, Alliance for Living, Covenant Shelter, Fresh New London, Safe Futures, the LOL Foodshare Garden, the diaper bank and hospital chaplaincies in New London and Middlesex counties. We have awarded the Homeless Hospitality Center \$10,000.00 this year to support their new initiatives to meet local growing needs due to Covid. Habitat for Humanity was awarded \$5,000.00 to support habitat housing.

The Board also supported the PARJE (Public Art for Racial Justice Education) initiative this year which seeks to employ public art to spark conversation and stimulate education on what it means to be engaged in antiracism.

The Board continues to support the Tree of Life, Green Grass, Haiti, and South Africa.

Additional funds were directed to Doctors Without Borders to send additional support to Haiti which was beset with additional political, environmental and health crises this year. IRIS of New Haven and IRC of New York also received gifts to further their refugee work worldwide.

The Board of Missions welcomes suggestions from members of the congregation highlighting other opportunities to offer support. It has been my honor and pleasure to serve on this board, in this inspirational church.