

First Congregational Church of Lebanon
Mission and Social Action Committee
2015 SURVEY OF CONGREGATION

In June 2011 our church decided to reaffirm, broaden and deepen our commitment to two service organizations, one here in the Upper Valley and one farther away. Ultimately, our congregation chose to pursue deeper ties with WISE, Second Growth, and the United Valley Interfaith Project here at home and Epilogos Charities, which serves the people of San Jose Villanueva, El Salvador. More than four years have passed since our last survey, and we now want to take stock of how we focus our time, talent, and financial resources, seeking as in the past to invite greater participation from our congregation as we strengthen relationships with our mission and service partners. The Mission and Social Action Committee requests your input in choosing these organizations.

CLOSE TO HOME

The organizations listed below are local institutions that our church has supported in the past. We would also like to learn of other organizations or issue areas that are important to you. ***Please choose or name five organizations or issue areas that are most important to you, and rank them from 1 (most important) to 5 (less so, but still important to you).***

- _____ **David's House:** Provides housing and support for children receiving treatment through Children's Hospital at Dartmouth (www.davids-house.org)
- _____ **1 Upper Valley Habitat for Humanity:** Helps build homes for families in need (www.uppervalleyhabitat.org)
- _____ **4 4 Headrest:** Addiction recovery services to people in need (www.headrest.org)
- _____ **Listen Community Services:** Provides necessities to low-income people (www.listencs.org)
- _____ **3 Second Growth:** programs to reduce risk for teen substance abuse and violence (www.secondgrowth.org)
- _____ **2 The Haven:** Provides emergency shelter, food and clothing (uppervalleyhaven.org/)
- _____ **United Valley Interfaith Project (UVIP):** Works with area faith organizations on social-justice issues (affordable housing, transportation, etc) (www.unitedvalleyinterfaithproject.org)
- _____ **5 WISE:** Empowers victims of domestic and sexual violence and stalking to become safe and self-reliant (www.wiseuv.org)
- _____ **Other issue area or organization (please fill in the blank):**
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FARTHER FROM HOME

Our church has been blessed by its mission work in Central America, both in El Salvador and Guatemala. The committee has been especially gratified by the way our relationship has developed with Epilogos and the people of San Jose Villanueva, an effort that culminated in a trip by several church members to El Salvador in 2014. Since that time, though, two developments have occurred that we believe make consideration of a new “farther from home” mission partnership opportune. First, El Salvador is currently plagued by levels of violence last seen during the vicious Civil War of the late 1980s and early 1990s, posing significant danger to those travelling to and working in the country. Sadly, the violence shows no sign of abating and has led Epilogos to curtail some of its activities. Second, but related, Mike and Suzie Jenkins, the on-site coordinators for Epilogos, are retiring in February 2016, ushering in a period of transition for the organization.

Opportunities for new partnerships can be found in the U.S and Central America. Here in the States, we might consider developing a relationship with Back Bay Mission, a United Church of Christ affiliate in Biloxi, Mississippi, that provides services to the poor and marginalized of the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Another path to explore would be doing mission work and developing ties with a Native American community, either on the East Coast or further out west. In Central America, there are a number of possibilities in Guatemala.

Please let us know of your interest in this area by ranking the following from 1 (most interested) to 4 (least interested):

 1 Mission in Guatemala

 3 UCC Back Bay Mission in Mississippi

 2 Native American mission partnership

 Other: Please tell us about your area of interest below, and provide your name and contact information if you are willing to share more information about it.

 I like them all.

Please return this survey to the church office by Sunday, December 13. Thank you for offering your opinion on our congregation’s mission and service commitments!