Rarely have I seen a church without some form of ministry that helps feed people. From community meals to food pantries, churches across the country make sure people have enough to eat. But I always wondered, wouldn’t it be better if none of these services had to exist. What if everyone simply had enough to eat?

Our churches share compassion by not only providing for the basic needs of our neighbors but also asking deeper questions of why these inequalities exist in the first place. Our immediate call to alleviate the suffering of those around us is paired with a prophetic witness calling for systemic reform.

All congregations in the United Church of Christ are invited to take part in the Neighbors in Need offering to address just this. Two thirds of the offering support justice and witness ministries of the United Church of Christ with one third of the offering given to the Council for American Indian Ministries (CAIM). Your gifts directly fund the Neighbors in Need grant program. This grant, for UCC congregations and partners, offers funding for both direct service and advocacy projects.

Thank you for your generosity!

*The Rev. Rachel McDonald works for the National Ministries of the UCC as Generosity Officer, OCWM and Special Mission Offerings. The four Special Mission Offerings of the United Church of Christ are One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church, Neighbors in Need, and the Christmas Fund. Together they demonstrate a commitment to building a just world for all. To learn more, go to https://www.ucc.org/ocwm\_special-support/*

---------------------

Gifts to Neighbors in Need (NIN) support the United Church of Christ’s ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). The other two-thirds of the offering support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, direct service projects, and grants. Neighbors in Need grants are annually awarded to UCC churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities.

---------------------

The UCC Office of Public Policy and Advocacy in Washington D.C. is funded in part by gifts to Neighbors in Need. The goal of the UCC Washington D.C. Office isto make a better world possible by addressing the systemic injustices we face as a country and as part of the world.

The UCC Washington Office was called into being by a resolution at General Synod 10 in 1975. This predecessor body to Justice and Local Church Ministries, then called the Office for Church in Society, was created to assume a leadership function for social action concerns in the UCC and to provide resources to the national, conference and local churches. Foremost among the tasks assigned to the office was identifying, analyzing and forecasting emerging social issues which call for the attention of the denomination.

Today the UCC staff in Washington D.C., in partnership with UCC staff, Conferences, Associations, congregations and individual UCC members, continues this mission by monitoring and seeking changes in legislation at local, state and federal levels through a variety of coalitions and working groups. The policies that guide this work are crafted by UCC members who gather for General Synod to pray, reflect and discern a faithful response to God’s call through resolutions and pronouncements on the issues facing our world.

Take part in your own advocacy effort and learn more using the new handbook, Advocacy 101 found here: <https://www.ucc.org/advocacy-101-resources/>

*The Neighbors in Need Offering is a Special Mission Offering of the United Church of Christ. Your gifts support ministries of justice and compassion, the Council for American Indian Ministries (CAIM) and Neighbors in Need grants. Thank you for your generosity!*

---------------------

God of compassion,

Give us the courage to breathe in care,

and breathe out all that separates us.

The voices of your people can be lost in a cacophony of need.

Help us to pay attention and see clearly our neighbors.

Encourage us to not only help, but listen,

so all may have a voice in the decisions that affect their lives.

Strengthen us to confront evil

and alleviate suffering.

Let us not turn away from the direct needs of ourselves and those around us

even as we seek to dismantle deeper injustice.

Turn us toward justice, peace and reconciliation.

We pray in your holy name,

Amen