**CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

Ministry Council

**Missions Ministry Team**

8207 Traditional Place

Cordova, TN 38016.7414

 September 1, 2020

Dear Co-Worker in Christ,

The Loaves & Fishes Offering this year is a response to the tragedy that the COVID-19 pandemic created throughout the world. For the first time in human history all the world experienced the same crisis. Nations around the world either urged or demanded their citizens to stay at home. Businesses, churches, public transportation, and normal social behaviors came to a stop. The intent was to stop the spread of the virus, which most countries accomplished, but the price for many people was the loss of employment and income. Families around the world were unable to work and quickly their reserves were depleted.

The results of the pandemic, in addition to the many thousands of lives lost, have been long lines at foodbanks in the wealthier countries like the USA, white flags in the windows of Guatemalan homes signaling families were out of food, strict quarantine laws lasting months in the Philippines creating food insecurity for families. The pandemic started in March for most countries. In the case of the USA, unemployment climbed into the millions in a matter of weeks. In the Philippines, the economy hit a 34-year low. In Guatemala, the white flags were a call for food as jobs were lost.

The Missions Ministry Team has determined that the Loaves & Fishes Offering in 2020 will go toward buying food for those impacted by COVID-19. We anticipate that the impact of the pandemic will continue throughout this year. Cumberland Presbyterians (and their neighbors) throughout the world will be affected for a long time and recovering will take time.

The Missions Ministry Team is requesting the offering each congregation receives this year be used as follows:

75% of the offering can stay in the local church to start or replenish your foodbank or it can be donated to a local foodbank. The MMT asks that the other 25% of the Loaves & Fishes Offering be sent to the MMT to be sent to Guatemala and the Philippines to buy food for those impacted by the pandemic. In both countries there is serious need and the MMT has an infrastructure in place to distribute food. MMT recognizes the need is great in your community as well as globally. We want to allow for flexibility, giving churches the freedom to adjust this offering as they see fit. If your church wants to change the percentages, that is fine. Some churches may decide that more than 25% of their offering should be used internationally.

Through God’s gifts to each of us, we have the opportunity to lift up those who have fallen due to the pandemic. We have the opportunity to make an impact in the lives of those we call our brothers and sisters. As we all look to God for our sustenance, let us share our bounty and help provide relief for those to whom God’s hand has opened.

Many of our churches will receive the Loaves & Fishes Offering on Thanksgiving Sunday, November 22. Please return the enclosed order form by September 30 to obtain your Loaves & Fishes boxes or email your order form to jellis@cumberland.org. Additional worship resources can be found on our website: cpcmcorg/mmt/loaves/.

Thank you for your participation in the Loaves & Fishes effort this year!

Yours in Christ,

Missions Ministry Team

**“*The Lord upholds all who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all look***

***to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy***

***the desires of every living thing.”* Psalm 145 :14-16**

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