

## **Revised Benevolence Task Force Report to the Congregation Council, FELC**

**March 28, 2023**

Please note the Task Force has revised its recommendation dated March 20, 2023, to include Micah 6 along with LuMin and LIRS. As FELC is a founding congregation of Micah 6, we believe it is important that it be specifically included in our benevolence outreach.

The Benevolence Task Force (Nancy Baden, Claudia Barlow, Lois Holck and Merrily Porter) worked together with a goal of choosing organizations that reflect the values of our congregation. During the course of this process, the congregation was invited to share input on organizations that members of the congregation supported.

When we came together we identified many organizations, local and global, that are doing good work here at home and worldwide, and that would benefit from support from FELC. Ultimately, we settled on intentional support of our **Lutheran organizations**, focusing on **LuMin**, working right here in our own backyard, and **Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services**, working nationally/globally. We feel that both organizations have a proven record of reflecting the values of First English and that both are good stewards of their resources. We recommend that the committed benevolence funds be divided equally between the two organizations.

**LuMin** is a ministry of the Southwestern Texas Synod and the ELCA Churchwide Organization to establish a Lutheran presence (ELCA) for the communities of higher education (primarily, The University of Texas) in Austin, TX. While maintaining a faithful ministry of Word and Sacrament for the campus community and developing leaders among those who affiliate with the campus ministry, the reach of this ministry is much farther. This campus ministry is a witness to inclusion, ecumenical partnerships, listening, grace, and service to the whole academic community.

**Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services** is a non-profit organization that welcomes and supports refugees and migrants entering the United States. It is one of several refugee resettlement agencies working with the Office of Refugee Resettlement and one of only two that serves unaccompanied refugee minors. From the mission statement of LIRS: *Grounded in our faith, we believe that everyone should be celebrated, and valued for their unique life experiences. We believe that diverse opinions, ideas, and beliefs are the foundation of a healthy organization and a flourishing society. Our history of welcome is the inspiration for our creation of a workplace that honors and supports everyone.*

**Micah 6** is a non-profit organization with a mission of working together with founding congregations and other ministry partners to identify and meet the needs of the homeless and the impoverished in the University of Texas campus area.

As a committee, we wholeheartedly support the work of all of these organizations.

### **Supplement to the Committee's Recommendation**

The next recommendation is beyond what we were asked to do. It is, however, similar to a plan we implemented, with significant benefit, in 2018.

There are a number of organizations that are doing wonderful service in the community and reflect the values of our congregation. We believe that the congregation would benefit from learning more about some of these organizations and how to be involved with them, through giving of each individual's time and financial resources. The Benevolence Committee proposes to invite speakers from organizations to attend worship services or adult forums for temple talks on a periodic basis, quarterly or more often, so that we, as a congregation, can learn, or be reminded about, the good work being done here at home.

The committee requests additional time to identify specific organizations and proposed dates for the council's consideration.