

## 2017 Special Offering

Photo: Paul Jeffrey



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# Week of Compassion

**When we give from a place of joy and purpose, the act of giving gives back much to us.**

Seven year-old, Jonah, from First Christian Church of Wheeling, West Virginia reminded his family and community about this powerful truth during the Week of Compassion Special Offering.

FCCW hosted a coloring contest focused on this year's Special Offering theme: You Are Here. Children, youth, and adults alike were invited to reflect on what it means to "be here" in the places where people are suffering and to "insert themselves" standing with these brothers and sisters in need.

Their pastor, Rev. Kenny Hardway, admits FCC Wheeling enjoys a little good-natured competition, especially when that competition supports a good cause. To stir-up some competition around the coloring contest, an anonymous donor gave \$50 for the winner to donate to Week of Compassion. And it worked! At least 25 people entered drawings into the competition.

Jonah was excited to participate. He remembered Sunday School conversations about children who have to walk miles each day for water, and he thought giving to Week of Compassion would be a great way to help. With this in mind, Jonah decided to draw wells and water.

During church that morning, when the youth and children selected the winning drawing, they selected Jonah's! He was thrilled to be able to give to Week of Compassion to support access to water all over the world.

Despite being a smaller-sized congregation, FCCW is often among the top-100 congregations for denominational offerings. They recently joined the Circle of Compassion, a group of congregations who have made sustaining gifts to the Week of Compassion Endowment

Fund through the Christian Church Foundation. The congregation gives almost a quarter of their annual budget to ministries outside their walls, and they talk frequently about being a church engaged in mission. This culture of generosity inspired Joshua.

After winning the competition and talking with his Dad about how the money he won would be used, Jonah collected all the money he had saved from past birthdays and Christmases: \$80 in total. Then he brought it back out to his father, and handing it to him said, "Will you make sure this goes to help people?"

Jonah wanted to give everything he had.

His generosity, and that of FCCW, challenges us all to consider how we can give more. It reminds us that when we give and act from a place of abundance, we inspire others to do so as well.

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