

New England Conference

Testimonials for Imagine No Malaria

Some of the inspiring stories and testimonials from New England United Methodist Churches are recorded here. There are many additional stories to be added! Please submit your story or testimonial at your earliest convenience to bonmarden@comcast.net. Thank You!



We are a small church, but took up offerings each week during Advent, and dedicated half of our Christmas Eve offering several years. We met our \$500 pledge, multiple times!
Agawam UMC, MA – Ken Blanchard

In Bridgeton, we got an old metal bed frame and rigged a “bed net” over it for the whole town to see. Bradley Memorial UMC is much more rural and known for our suppers. We put out a donation can and literature for each supper. We don’t count money collected, we count families saved. It seems to connect so much stronger. We assembled a mosquito for each \$10.00 and added a person to our poster to show how many mosquito nets we had funded. My youngest parishioner wanted to squash all the bad mosquitoes, so we had a grand stomp on 11/17 to show we are stomping out malaria. She wrote me a note saying “Dear Pastor Cathy, We had the best time squashing those mosquitoes. Thank you!” We held a Chocolate festival with tables loaded with sweet chocolate goodies sold to the community which raised \$242.50. Because we are tithing our offerings and distributing 50% to local missions and 50% to wider missions, we sent another \$810 to INM. In all we have sent over \$3,100.
Bridgton and Bradley Memorial UMCs Fryeburg Harbor ME - Cathy Cantin

Our Sunday School raised \$282 by counting household items and putting coins in jars for the amount specified. We set up a small display in the front of our church, used a malaria skit in worship and several other opportunities to integrate INM into the message such the Luke 12: 13-21 scripture. At our annual bean supper fundraiser, everyone agreed to add an INM pie sale. \$10 for a pie! We also distributed the free bracelets and placed pamphlets on tables and setup an educational display at the meal. Our gifts now exceed \$1200. So excited!!!!!!!!!! Our INM Float won a prize for best use of theme.
Washburn/Lidstone UMC's - Lisa Reed

We designated our 2014 Pentecost Service Offering, \$445, to Imagine No Malaria.

Aroostook Cluster - Northern Maine District

Note: The TriState District Offering for their DS Installation in 2014 also supported Imagine No Malaria!

We surpassed our Annual Conference goal of \$1,000, doubled our goal to \$2000 and then this challenge was offered. “The Wildlife Center in York is willing to come on a Sunday for our service with a snake, an endangered box turtle and a possum! As your Lay Leader, I’m willing to up the challenge - if we raise \$2,500 I will kiss the animals too!

Portsmouth UMC NH - PennySue

On a Saturday we went to the local farmers market and set up camp. Along with the costume, we had a LARGE flyswater, and a jungle helmet. Also put together a bed with a net and baby in it, and clipped a lot of our mosquitoes on it. We collected \$253.00 in our four hour time there. One gentleman who came was very generous because he had worked in Africa with Doctors Without Borders for several years. He also contracted malaria twice and had a tattoo on his arm of a young child and his mother from there. It was a fun day for us!

CrossRoads UMC, Sanford ME, Candy Hagan

We won a cash prize for our float in the Walpole Day community parade and gave it to IMN! Our Imagine No Malaria float was providentially followed by the Mosquito Terminators. We were all tickled and they promised that if people did business with them and mentioned INM they would donate something to the campaign. I've contacted them this year and they are willing to make the same partnership.

South Walpole UMC – Sarah Elewononi

Each year the Christian Education committee offers a two week Advent Program with a light supper then activities on a specific topic one of which was Imagine No Malaria. Each evening before the meal, we lit a candle and prayed for the families of victims who lost their lives to this disease, for healing and recovery for those afflicted and for hope that one day this disease will be forever wiped away. Each night after the meal, a video from the Imagine No Malaria resources was shown and then those gathered made mosquitoes and ornaments and placed them on our "Tree of Life" which was covered with white lights symbolizing "hope" and a large net signifying the importance of purchasing nets. Two of our parishioners who have been on mission trips to Sierra Leone recognized people in the INM video and knew them by name. That is connectionalism!!!

Our charge to the congregation was to place a donation of \$10 in an envelope and place it on the "Tree of Life". This event raised over \$1200.00. Our youth group introduced this project by participating in the "Imagine No Malaria " skit from the website. On Mother's Day, we joined other Methodist churches in continuing the fight against malaria by responding to the UMFNE matching grant opportunity. This time we asked them to donate \$10 to honor the Mother's of those affected by the disease. For Father's Day, we asked members of the congregation to donate to honor a father whose children have fallen victim to malaria. The Mission Committee adopted this as one of their programs and came up with new and innovative ways to support this important and vital ministry.

Belfast UMC ME - Evelyn Littlefield

Every Sunday, the kids brought their own offering. Over the past three or four years, the balance is over \$200. On Mother's Day and Father's Day, we hope to boost that quite a bit.

West Kennebunk UMC, West Kennebunk, ME

We have one child in the Sunday school at Goodwins Mills who has collected money on her own for the No More Malaria campaign, and the rest of the children are on board with this collection. If you feel it's appropriate, a thank you to them would also be really nice to encourage them to keep up the good work. Thanks!

Goodwins Mills United Methodist Church, ME - Debra J. Hanson

At Stoughton UMC, a mission person who is from Cameroon shared she would go to the government office there to talk about Imagine No Malaria on her next trip home.

Stoughton UMC, Stoughton MA

I just wanted to share that we have a 9 year old girl who just put her birthday money (\$10) in our Imagine No Malaria envelope for conference. Her mother asked her what she wanted to do with her money and she said "I don't want there to be anymore malaria". Just had to share!

Cox Memorial UMC Hallowell Maine - Gayle Holden

On Sunday, May 18th, the Mission Committee sponsored a lunch for the benefit of Imagine No Malaria. Our children and youth created some wonderful posters and, in the process, learned much about malaria, its devastating effects and how important mosquito netting is to its prevention. We enjoyed great live music and we roasted (not cooked, broiled nor barbecued) "large and in-charge" our friend David. It sure seemed as though everyone had a very good time. AND....we raised over \$427.00!! And that will be doubled by the Conference! Not sure how many nets that will be, but it is so good to know that we can have a good time, and, at the same time, help prevent the spread of this deadly disease. Many thanks go to all who contributed....their money, time, work, and talents.

Grant Memorial UMC, Presque Isle ME – Linda Boucher

Thank you for your kind note and words of encouragement for Bolsters Mills UMC. On July 6th we baptized two adults and accepted 4 new members into our small but determined congregation - one of the reasons stated was that they thought we did so much for the community in which they live and for the larger community that surrounds us and we even took on the challenge of INM nets and met our goal in six months, not a year as we anticipated when we took on the challenge. Thanks for being in the position you are in - you are an inspiration! Thank you for your kind note and words of encouragement.

Bolsters Mills UMC, ME

One of the youth group kids visited the Missions Committee here last night and requested that they double our fundraising from our Vacation Bible School mission project on Imagine No Malaria. The Committee agreed and doubled the \$573 in fundraising that the kids collected during VBS.

Calvary Church, Arlington MA - Susan Stewart

Our treasurer just sent \$210 (21 lives). And two other people sent their donations directly to the address in the envelope for a total of 23. This is a tiny little church that almost closed its doors a few years ago, but instead chose to try doing church a little differently in order to keep the doors open and be a part of life out here. Attendance has almost doubled, to just at 20 average attendance since then, and it's the first time they (we) have participated in a larger scale UMC mission in ages.

I think one of the things you did well was make it so clear. \$10 = 1 life. That was something that people could do even in this impoverished area of Vermont, and feel they made a real difference. It made them feel anyone could make a difference, and enthusiasm was high. Many of them have been wearing their bright green bracelets for the whole month of May. Thank you for running such a powerful, clear campaign. You not only helped the people we could collect money for. You made a difference in our church. This morning we announced the results, and used our bulletin to make the point that these are not numbers, they are people.

Rupert UMC, VT, Tom Atkins (Note: Rupert UMC's story is shared in Mike Slaughter's recent book!)

We had an Imagine No Malaria Sunday at Main St UMC in Nashua and raised \$802. The best part of our Sunday was the participation of two of our members, one from India and one from Ghana who spoke during our "sermon" that Sunday. The member from India talked about how it felt to have malaria and the disruption it caused in his life. The member from Ghana described taking her children to the hospital over and over again, then getting bed nets for them. After they had the bed nets, she noticed that she was no longer constantly taking them to the hospital for treatment although her neighbors'

children were still becoming ill with malaria. She described how she had to retreat the nets occasionally, and we really felt that we had a better picture of how bed nets work.

Main St. UMC Nashua NH - Phyllis Appler

In 2014, the Youth Group led the worship service around INM themes, and collected half of the donations in the offering. Then there was a lunch of African foods (and donation baskets), singing by our Ghanaian choir, and the sale of wristbands and fly swatters. Leadership came from one of our youth who participated in the missions presentation at Camp Aldersgate for Confirmands.

Wesley UMC, Worcester MA - Betsy Pennino

I just wanted to tell you that our church pledged to save 100 lives this year for Imagine No Malaria. We had collected \$690.00 as of Saturday November 8th. During the summer we could not collect for INM as we were trying to stay afloat with bills and I was skeptical about us coming up with \$310.00 between November and December special offerings. Well, Rev. Nancy said a few weeks back that if we could make it by our last collection on December 14th, she would do the sermon on Sunday December 21st as "Promise" the clown. Guess what? Last Sunday in our special offering for INM we not only collected the \$310 that we needed to meet our goal but we collected a total of \$489.00 and saved another 17 lives. PRAISE GOD! We decided that quite a few people must want to see "Promise" the clown and I will never be skeptical again.

Blessings, Aldersgate UMC, Worcester MA - Sharon Nelson

We just sent our \$1,000 pledge in for North Charlestown. It did not take long to raise and we had a wonderful time doing it. We cut out dolls and put them on a 'mosquito net' draped over the cross. With each hundred dollars we took a 'child' off the net and attached to our 'village' which was actually a handmade tapestry I had from Kenya. We are so glad that we participated. We hope to get another project going in our community in collaboration with the library....

North Charlestown UMC, NH - Heidi Smith

This congregation is an awesome one and they really got behind the "Imagine No Malaria" campaign. Marilyn's leadership and creativity (paper mosquitoes pinned to nets, mosquitoes made out of pipe cleaners, "live" mosquitoes acting in plays) brought it all together. We even had a basketball game fundraiser with free throw contests and such! Lots of fun! We're very proud of the fact that we were able to raise so much for INM as a means of eradicating malaria for good.

Trinity UMC, Springfield MA - Wendy Freels

Hard to believe it was almost two years ago that I helped organize the March INM program at Wesley UMC in Concord which celebrated African culture and where personal testimonies touched lives to get involved in INM. We returned from lengthy cross country travel/volunteering and I read the Bishop's challenge looking for 270 New England churches to raise \$500, so I started planning for Advent. With the aid of personal testimony from Makopa (one of our first refugees and now a recent college grad) and Advent alternative gift cards, as of this past Sunday our total is \$497.79! I will add the \$2.21 to pull it up to \$500! At Missions meeting last evening, Pastor Patricia asked if we could plan one more event before the end of the 4 year fundraising period!!

One of our original refugee families lost their first child, daughter Evon, at age 2 to malaria. This is the reason I became involved in NBN then INM. They relocated to Amarillo, TX in 2011 due to lack of jobs in NH. When they came to the USA, John (father) promised God and the people of Burundi that he would return to care for the orphaned children of Burundi. In TX, they became involved with St Paul's UMC and met Pastor Perry Hunsaker who have been extremely helpful and supportive, sending aid and money for

food and medicines for the 223 children. Evon's Hope Ministry received their tax exempt status on the exact day we were visiting them in July!! We are trying to coordinate a date for them to come to NH to share about their ministry.

Contoocook UMC, NH - Sandy Fisher

In our community, a person asked about sign which mentioned Imagine No Malaria. I gave him some information and a donation of \$600 was given to church! Two of our young men sold the eggs from their chickens also for Imagine No Malaria.

Old Town UMC, ME - Dan Wilson

For three years, the Christmas Tree recycling project generated mission dollars for Imagine No Malaria serving the community's recycling needs. The endeavor raised \$13,000 a year – for three years!

Carter Memorial UMC, Needham MA

A lively bulletin board with paper people symbolized the progress made as Crawford Memorial UMC joined our campaign – they filled the board with lives saved!

Crawford Memorial UMC, Winchester MA

*Pictures of other events and activities from across the Conference will be posted soon.
Please send in your story as we celebrate this accomplishment!*