

1. Local Mission Work: Overwhelming Focus on Food Insecurity

Trend: Every congregation except one mentions food-related outreach—food banks, pantries, meal programs, backpack or holiday food baskets.

- **Food pantries & distributions** (9 churches) keep on-site or partner pantries stocked week-to-week.
- **Meal programs & soup kitchens** (7 churches) offer free dinners or lunches (e.g. Salvation Army lunches, weekly soup kitchens).
- **Backpack/school-year support** (8 churches) provide backpacks, school supplies, lunch-fee assistance for local elementary schools.
- **Baby pantry/diaper drives** (5 churches) supply diapers, formula, clothing through “baby showers” or baby pantries.

2. Common Partner Organizations

Nearly every congregation works through or alongside established nonprofits and ecumenical coalitions:

Partner Type	Examples	Frequency
Regional food banks	Food Bank of Eastern Michigan; Hidden Harvest	10+
School-district programs	Local elementary backpack programs; school supply drives	8
Ecumenical meal sites	Salvation Army; Soup kitchens; Stone Soup Food Bank	6
Baby/diaper pantries	Underground Railroad Baby Pantry; local baby pantry	5
Housing & shelter ministries	Habitat for Humanity; Sleep in Heavenly Peace; local rescue missions	7
Prison ministry	“All About the Cross” prison outreach; jail ministry	2

These partnerships let small congregations “punch above their weight” by plugging into established logistics, funding streams, and volunteer training.

3. Hands-On & Creative Projects

- **Youth-built little free pantries:** one youth group designed, built, and secured a Matthew 25 grant for a pantry that has distributed over \$1,000 worth of food .
- **Knitting/crochet ministries:** weekly groups produce 200–300 hats, gloves, prayer-shawls, quilts annually for shelters and school-kids .
- **Mobile distribution site exploration:** a church is in talks to become an EM Food Bank mobile site as early as June 2025.

4. Varied International Engagement:

- **Mission co-workers & translators:** several support individual PC(USA) coworkers in Philippines, Africa, Guatemala, and Wycliffe Bible Translators.
- **Long-term partnerships:** St. Andrew’s (Davison) sustained a Honduras building/ministry partnership for 15 years; another supported missionaries in Russia through 2024 .
- **Disaster response funds:** routine gifts to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) and OGHS (One Great Hour of Sharing).
- **1/3 of responding churches** report zero international connections .

These global ties tend to focus on relationship-based support.

5. Looking Ahead

Continuations or expansions on current mission engagement:

- Sustaining food pantries, and exploring mobile food distribution
- Conversations around how to best use building space to benefit others in the community
- Vision-planning to identify emerging neighborhood needs

Future vision centers on:

1. **Deeper local focus**—food, housing, school support remain top priorities.
2. **Collaborative networks**—leveraging Presbytery-wide grants, shared training, and cross-congregational partnerships.
3. **Selective global engagement**—continuing long-standing mission co-worker relationships rather than launching new countries.

6. How Presbytery Can Help

Common asks for the Mission Coordination Committee & Presbytery of Lake Huron:

- **Grant opportunities** tailored to small congregations (start-up funds, Matthew 25 mini-grants)
- **Volunteer training** in urban ministry methods, food-distribution logistics, trauma-informed care
- **Networking** to share best practices, encourage and organize joint initiatives (e.g. mobile pantry hubs)
- **Organize volunteer groups** when PLH churches might need extra “helping” hands for mission events.
- **Educational opportunities** regarding successful, well run, agencies and their openings for volunteer support beyond simply the financial – especially those that might effectively use older folks.