

## St. John's UMC "amBAG" Brings Hope

In Filipino culture, education is regarded as the most valuable inheritance, or "pamana," that parents can provide to their children. This belief stems from the idea that education equips individuals with enduring knowledge and skills that cannot be taken away.

We believe education plays a vital role in children's growth and development. Unfortunately, in the Philippines, access to this fundamental right has become a privilege for many. A significant number of children face barriers to attending primary school due to expenses that extend beyond tuition fees. These financial challenges can prevent their parents from sending them to school to receive the education they deserve.

As a Filipino-American congregation, we are characterized by a belief system centered on resiliency, hope, and love. These values allow us to empathize with the struggles many Filipino families encounter each time they send their children to school.

St. John's United Methodist Church in Oak Park took the initiative this school year to contribute (amBAG) to this "pamana" (inheritance) and reached more than 100 children in 6 communities in the Philippines. The program is called "amBAG sa Karunungan," which means Gift to Wisdom. The BAG is capitalized in "amBAG" to emphasize the bags with school supplies that contribute to "karunungan", or wisdom.

