



Outreach Inspirations and Examples

A sample of congregation-based outreach ministries in Southwest Florida

2018

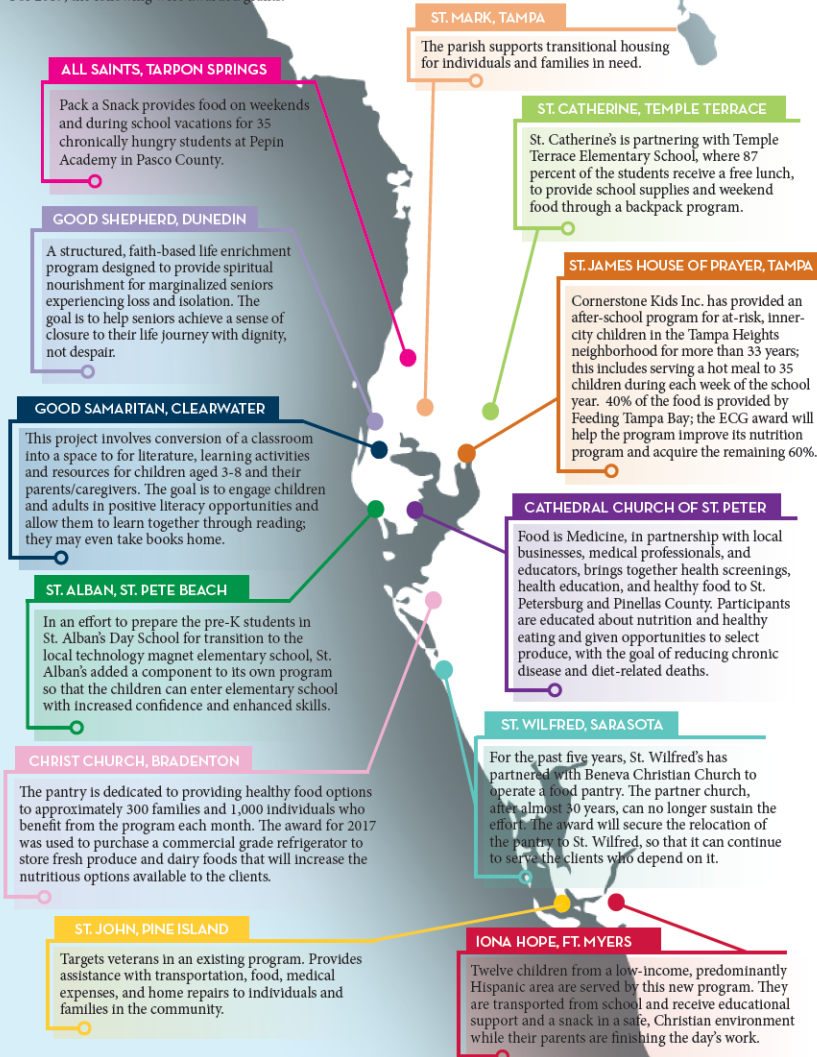
Engaging in Mission

JUST ONE YEAR

Each year, congregations in the Diocese of Southwest Florida apply for Episcopal Charities Grants. The best, most innovative and useful grants are approved, and announced at the Diocesan Convention. In the six years of Episcopal Charities grants, these seed grants have been instrumental in growing charitable efforts within the diocese.

The hope for Episcopal Charities ten years ago was not only that worthy causes could receive the support they needed to survive and indeed thrive. In addition, celebrating these efforts across the diocese leads to additional parishes deciding to begin or expand their own programs, adapting them to the needs of their particular community.

For 2017, the following were awarded grants:



HOW FAR WILL YOUR DONATION REACH?

Episcopal Charities in Southwest Florida

Congregation-based ministries are at the heart of our diocesan Episcopal Charities Endowment, which has granted \$186,000 over the last 6 years. Apply for a grant to kick start your outreach project – applications are at www.episcopalswfl.org – keyword 'Episcopal Charities'.

SWFL Irma Relief Fund

Hurricane Irma swept through Southwest Florida in September 2017. As our congregations have worked to repair our churches and homes, many also have contributed resources to aid our neighbors. \$25,000 of funding remains available for humanitarian aid to individuals impacted by Irma. Contact Anne Vickers at the Diocesan Office if you or your ministry can help reach the individuals in your community who still suffer after this storm.

The Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Florida

DaySpring Episcopal Center
8005 25th Street East
Parrish, FL 34219

(941) 556-0315
www.episcopalswfl.org



St. Andrew's, Boca Grande Red Bag Ministry

It all started with a little red bag...

At the beginning of each month (and then throughout the month) we invite parishioners to pick up a Red Bag on their way out of church. In the side pocket they find a shopping list for the outreach organization we are supporting for that month. Parishioners take the shopping bag and list and fill it according to their own financial abilities. (They don't need to purchase every item...though many do).

Everyone is asked to return the bag by the end of the month. We then have volunteers who unpack the bags and sort through the items and repack them in boxes to go to the identified charity.

From November 1 - March 30 we collected more than 550 bags, with an estimated value of items purchased by parishioners of \$21,200. We focus on protein-rich foods like canned hams, tuna, and peanut butter.

Recipients of the Red Bag Donations:

November and December	St. James Food Pantry
January	Soldier's Boxes (items re-packaged and sent to troops overseas)
February	St. James Food Pantry
March	Share the Blessings (non-profit in Port Charlotte that helps the homeless)

We started this ministry in January 2017 and it has been a wonderful success. Parishioners love the hands-on approach to helping others. One parishioner told me that when she goes shopping she takes the red bag with her. As she shops for her own personal items she is reminded how fortunate she is and so feels more generous in filling the red bag there in her cart. "I like to slip in a few extra items that a family might need!"

Another person commented that the checkout girls at the local Publix can identify our bags on site. "Oh you must go to St. Andrew's" followed by a chuckle and a smile. Evangelism and Outreach all rolled into one!

The Rev. Michelle Robertshaw
Rector



All Souls, North Fort Myers Wednesday Outreach Ministry

Every Wednesday morning, Barber Hall (parish hall) comes to life at 9 am when we open the doors for our Outreach Program.

As part of the **Food Bank Program**, we give a maximum of 2 bags of groceries a month per household to those who live in N. Ft. Myers and fall into the income categories set by USDA. With the generous donations of church members and friends of the church, we are able to buy most of the food given out from the Harry Chapin Food Bank.

69.9 tons (121,992 lbs) of food purchased via Harry Chapin Food Bank; 1,800 lbs from Wake Up America

Through our **Thrift Store**, we provide clothing free. Clients may "shop" in the Thrift Store and receive up to \$10 per month (Thrift Store prices) per person per month free; \$20 per family. During the cold weather, jackets and blankets are given out free.

We have received a grant from the Less County Homeless Coalition to provide funds for **driver's licenses, state ID's and obtaining birth certificates.**

54 Birth Certificates, 23 Marriage Certificates, 49 Florida Picture ID's

The Parish Nurse, Pat Epifanio, checks weight, blood pressure, heart and answers health questions. When needed, she makes referral for medical treatment to Family Health Center or the ER.

The Health Department comes on the 1st Wednesday for testing and immunizations.

Habitat for Humanity comes the 3rd Wednesday to provide information on low cost housing for seniors.

Social Worker: One of our church members provides counseling and referrals of clients as needed.

Family Health Center provides free medical care for the homeless; on a sliding scale for others.

All Souls Prayer Ministry is available in the church from 10:00 AM-NOON for prayers and healing.

In addition, our Outreach Program provided:

372 Haircuts given by Helen and Mike

500 Personal hygiene packets

118 Work boots for employment

213 Bus passes to Clients for various appointments

88 Bicycles donated or purchased with grant money and given to clients, 123 bike locks

A summary of our activities from January to December 2017:

8,278 Families Served

4,727 Children Served

11,709 Adults Served

3,151 Seniors Served

3,743 Thrift Store Clients / \$48,218 of goods given to clients

10,329 Meals prepared and served by our wonderful kitchen staff



St. Thomas, St. Petersburg Pack A Snack and LunchPals with North Shore Elementary

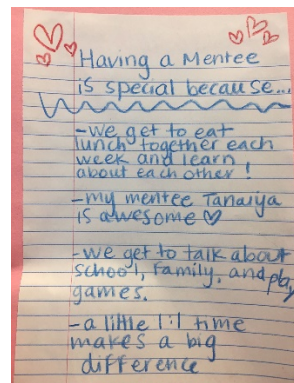
The neighborhood elementary school, North Shore Elementary, has a recent history of being “not a very good” school. It is a Title 1 school, meaning over 70% of the students receive free or reduced lunch. This is somewhat astonishing at first when you think about the zip codes it serves, but then when you factor in how wealthy many of those families are and think about how they all send their kids to elite private schools, the picture begins to come into more focus. In the past several years, a group of parents, some of whom are St. Thomas parishioners, decided to reclaim a sense of pride in our neighborhood public school. Through their efforts, [North Shore is now one of the most desirable elementary schools in the county](#), while maintaining a Title 1 status. Think about that!

Our congregation participates in two efforts there. One is called Pack-a-Sack whereby we gather supplies and pack snack bags for any kid who needs it to take home. It contains nutritious foods and is very helpful given that many kids do not get to eat unless they are at school. Each group at church, from the youth group to the choir to the men’s group and more each take turns making the snack packs, and then parishioner volunteers take them over to the school each week. We were mentored in this program by Riviera United Methodist church, and I think it is always good to work in conjunction with other parishes in the community. This year, 33 people at St. Thomas put in time on this project, comprising an average of 31 hours per month of volunteer work, packing 1449 sacks!!

The second is the Lunch Pals mentoring program. Many of our parishioners participate in this one-on-one mentoring program. They go and eat lunch with their mentee, providing them with excellent one on one time for 30 minutes a week, with an adult who will listen to them, respect them, and love them.

St. Thomas has been recognized by North Shore as being an Outstanding Partner at one of their First Friday celebrations because of these efforts. Attached is a picture of parishioner Richard Davis receiving this recognition, a picture of the First Friday celebration, and a picture of a Lunch Pals note written to a mentor.

The Rev. Ryan Whitley
Rector



St. David, Englewood

Jubilee Center - 'Just Neighbors' Meetings and Food Pantry

The 'Just Neighbors' monthly meetings bring together churches, organizations and individuals who are engaged in mission and ministry to the least, lost, and lonely in our community. Our agenda is to provide updated resources and referrals, to challenge and confront people to understand the facts of poverty and injustice, and encourage them to take an active role in meeting the needs of the homeless and low-income families in our community. There is a speaker at each "Just Neighbors" meeting and time for sharing and reflection.

In October 2012, we opened our on-site Jubilee Center in the old day school facility on the church grounds (previously the Jubilee Center used a room in the church parish hall). The Center is both church and community donor-supported through donations of food, bread from Publix Food Stores, and money from individuals, community service clubs and several gated communities. The Center is open for days a week and its ministries include:

- **Resource Referral Services** - people are referred to the social services that they are seeking. We also help with financial aid on a limited basis. Once a month we provide blood pressure tests from a nurse and basic legal form notarized signatures from a notary.
- **Food Pantry** – anyone who is a resident in the Englewood community and is seeking food is able to receive food every other week. Each patron receives a pre-packed box of food according to the number of people in their family and bread and assorted pastries. Personal hygiene products are available as well as diapers for children and adults. At Christmas, children receive presents and school supplies are handed out at the start of the school year.
- **Clothes Closet** – one day a week we hand out free clothing for all ages – babies, toddlers, teens and adults with a special area of dress clothes for those going to a job interview.
- **Financial support to other agencies** that serve our clients such as FISH (providing rides to doctor visits and food shopping), Sarasota United for Responsibility and Equality (a social justice organization of faith communities), The Cancer Foundation, CARE (Center for Abuse and Rape Emergencies), Family Promises (helping the homeless break the cycle) HELP of Charlotte County, Meals on Wheels, Community Presbyterian Day School for need-based scholarships, The Pregnancy Center, Englewood Community Health Action Team.
- **Backpacks of Food** - Each week when school is in session, a special Jubilee Center initiative fills Backpacks with healthy food so that Englewood Elementary School students on federal lunch aid have snacks on the weekends.
- **Food Truck Distribution** - We collaborate with the All Faiths Food Bank and host a monthly food truck distribution of packaged food, fresh vegetables and meats to all Englewood residents.

For the year 2017, there were 2,496 visits for 3,714 adults and 1,589 children. 80% of our food comes from community donations.

Pat Knox
Director of the Jubilee Center



St. Mary's, Bonita Springs Harvest Time Ministries

Harvest Time Ministries is a community outreach organization focused on the needs of migrant agricultural workers, temporary workers and other low-income communities in Bonita Springs and its surrounding area. Its officers and members are all volunteers recruited from churches and other charitable organizations in the Bonita Springs area. St. Mary's members have played a major role for almost 10 years.

Activities include providing food, clothing and household goods, and assisting with other needs as they arise. Financial support is provided by area churches, other charitable organizations and individual donations. Bi-weekly visits to the camps include distribution of food, clothing and housewares. The visits also include inspirational music and a spiritual message led by Church of Jesus de la Rocca clergy to provide emotional and spiritual support. The music and message are in Spanish.

St. Mary's members, organized by Fred Cable, have lead roles in the procurement and distribution of food and other needed household items. This past year, about 20 members of St. Mary's met every other Friday morning (from November through March) to pack and load approximately 120 grocery-size bags of food and to help organize peanut butter, jelly, and donated baked goods, as well as diapers, clothing and other items. On the following Saturday morning St. Mary's members travel first to a community that houses migrant workers and their families, and then to a low-income mobile home community to distribute the food and other goods.

In December, St. Mary's members purchased, wrapped and distributed toys and clothing to all of the children (almost 100) in the two communities. All of us feel truly blessed to be working on this project, which we believe plays a small part in improving the lives of the working families, particularly the children.

The Rev. Michael Rowe
Rector



Good Shepherd, Dunedin Sunshine Plaza Furniture Thrift Store

In a landmark decision to expand one of its core ministries, the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd has purchased the retail facility located at 1714 N. Ft. Harrison, in the nearby Greenwood neighborhood of northwest Clearwater, Fla, appropriately known as Sunshine Plaza.

“We were made up of only a few volunteers when we started. Now we have over 20 volunteers, employ four individuals from the local community and will soon welcome a store manager in the month ahead,” according to Gus Robbins-Penniman, the store’s founder and ministry leader. “Our team picks up donations of furniture and other household items throughout Pinellas County for free and resells them at the shop for modest prices. But more than reselling furniture, we provide hope and a sense of community to a neighborhood that is hungry for both. One of the intangibles provided by this ministry is conversation and compassion. There’s not a day that goes by when someone from the local neighborhood doesn’t stop in just to say hello to a welcoming and supportive group of new friends.”

When he approached the church leadership about the idea back in 2010, Robbins-Penniman was armed with a background in property management, prior experience with the Lamb of God Thrift Store in the San Carlos district of Ft. Myers, Florida, and a dream of making the same thing happen in Dunedin. He signed a lease for the first 1,000 square feet in January, 2012. In the last six years, the furniture store has grown to 6,500 square feet, and with an average sales growth rate of 53% per year it has generated over \$465,000 in revenue. This is significant, but more importantly the store has contributed \$267,000 to local charities during this time.

“Today, most churches depend on their volunteers and not just Sunday morning collections to support the ministries they believe in,” according to Good Shepherd’s treasurer Joe Nixon. “We have been blessed by having members who have stepped up to the challenge. Just last year we logged over 12,500 hours of volunteer time to support our ministries. This commitment has enable us to not only serve the Greenwood community, but also assist our other ministries such as Grace House, providing transitional housing for families who have recently lost their home, Haven House, providing shelter for battered persons, Resurrection House Mission in Dade City, Florida, serving farm workers, and Meals of Hope and Pack-a-Sack, both providing food to those in need.”

With all of this pointing in the right direction, making the decision to purchase and own the facility was still a tough choice. To have a better understanding of the way forward, the Vestry invited all of the parishioners to a town hall meeting. Nearly 80 members attended – some expressed their optimism, others were not so optimistic. The tipping point came when the congregation realized that the increased rental structure would put unnecessary pressure on the ministry’s ability to serve the community. At the end of the day the town hall meeting was seen as a marked success – all had their concerns addressed and expressed confidence that the Vestry would make the right decision on behalf of the parish.

Looking forward, the future is indeed bright for Sunshine Plaza and the ministries it supports. Store operations will continue to be reviewed by its own Board of Directors, with additional oversight by the parish Vestry. Day-to-day activities will be handled by a professional store manager, and the expanded space will allow for additional donations by a generous community - just by dialing 727-600-5820. With the threat of surging rental rates now eliminated by the store owning the facility, expectations are even higher that this ministry will continue to grow and help those in need even more than it has in the past.

Gus Robbins-Penniman
Ministry Leader



St. Mark's, Venice Sack Lunch Program

The Sack Lunch Program at St. Mark's has been in existence for approximately 5 years. We learned of a need from the Center of Hope for people who come to them during the work seeking food - most have nowhere to live. The Mission and Outreach Committee had been discussing what several members had been involved with before moving to Venice - making sack lunches and giving them to the homeless. Since the Center of Hope gave us a drop-off place where people were already coming, this seemed like an opportunity to serve in the community.

Over the years we have consistently furnished 100 sack lunches each week. During 2 winters we were asked to furnish 150 sack lunches per week for 3 months (February, March, and April). A friend who owns Herman's Meat Market on Shamrock in Venice she said she would furnish the bread for the sandwiches. We purchase ham, cheese, soft protein bars, a cup of applesauce w/spoon, and a napkin plus plastic bags for the sandwiches and paper bags to put everything in as well. All included, the cost is \$1.00 per sack lunch. A local realtor has given money for small bottles of water to be available during the summer months. We do not put them in the sacks because of weight issues.

We pack each Tuesday at St. Mark's Episcopal Church. There are 5 teams. Four teams work each month and the 5th when there are 5 Tuesdays in the month. Two teams of 8 St. Mark's parishioners work the 1st and 3rd Tuesday mornings. We begin around 8am so the packing can be completed and delivered to Center of Hope no later than 9:30am. The 2nd and 4th Tuesday's are covered by people from Interfaith Outreach. When there is a 5th Tuesday Grace Methodist Church members pack. The cost of approximately \$120 per week is divided - 2 weeks for St. Mark's, 2 weeks for Interfaith Outreach, and Grace Methodist pays for their week.

Michael & Lunetta Knowlton purchase the food from Costco and the paper/plastic products from Walmart, shopping twice a month in order for the food to be fresh. The 3 groups chipped in toward the cost of a small refrigerator for the perishable items so we wouldn't have to take up space in the churches kitchen.

Sandy Albanese
Parish Administrator



St. Andrew's, Tampa

Project F.A.I.T.H. Lunch Program

Project F.A.I.T.H. (Food And Information for Tampa's Homeless) is now in its seventeenth year at St. Andrew's, serving 20-40 bag lunches every weekday to the needy and homeless of downtown Tampa. This program is funded 100% by donations and no monies come from St. Andrew's Operating account. A consortium of churches headed by First Presbyterian in downtown Tampa also supports the program financially on a quarterly basis.

This popular program is staffed daily with church volunteers and a team from Johnson, Pope, Bokor, Ruppel & Burns law firm, located downtown. Can you imagine shopping for 200 lunches every week? This is also done on a volunteer basis. Twice a month we make a grocery run to Sam's Club. Each lunch bag contains water, meat, fruit cup, crackers, dessert, plus utensil, napkin and scripture verse.

We also receive sandwiches twice a month from the Peanut Butter & Jelly Ministry at Nativity Catholic Church in Brandon along with clothing and other goodies we distribute at lunchtime. This year, we also received special goodie bags from St. Mark's Episcopal Church youth group. And St. Andrew's Outreach committee supplies KleanKits (hygiene bags) which are given out as part of the lunch program on the first of the month.

Kathleen Good Jenkins
Ministry Leader



St. John, Naples

St. John's Thrift Shoppe Outreach Grants

St. John's Shoppe is one of this parish's largest ministries. This small but mighty thrift boutique offers top quality "nearly new" merchandise such as furniture and home accessories, designer apparel and accessories for men and women, hard back books, housewares, fine china and silver, jewelry and much more. The Shoppe is operated six days per week from 10 AM – 4 PM with mainly a volunteer staff. Since opening in April 1982, Shoppe profits have generated over \$3 million dollars which has been given in grants to local Collier charities. St. John's Outreach Committee is responsible for researching and interviewing charities applying for grants, and based on detailed criteria, grants are awarded.

40-50 women and men volunteers staff the Shoppe six days a week, serving in half, full or multi-day shifts. They come from a variety of church denominations in the Naples area.

At the St. John's Grant Award celebration in 2016, \$160,000 was presented to 14 Collier charities during a wonderful celebration at the 9 am service. The 2017 Outreach Grants went towards:

Alzheimer Support Network
Christian Healing Center
Habitat for Humanity of Collier County
Literacy Volunteers of Collier County
St. Matthews House
Naples Therapeutic Riding Center

Baby Basics of Collier County
Laces of Love Charitable Foundation
Harry Chapin Food Bank of SWFL
Shelter for Abused Women & Children
Collier Resource Center

The Rev. Joe Maiocco
Rector



St. John, Pine Island

Beacon of Hope – Veterans Services

St. John's was one of four churches that began the Beacon of Hope after Hurricane Charley in 2004. The Beacon has continued to grow and expand, as needs on our island have become apparent. We have several parishioners who are Board Members and we have provided monetary assistance as well as support for the Beacon in our outreach efforts since that time.

The Client Services Program provides direct assistance for individuals and families on Pine Island. We provide funds to help with transportation, medical expenses including prescriptions, rent, utilities, food, counseling, home repairs and miscellaneous expenses. Last year we expanded our program to provide Beacon Bites (formerly Meals on Wheels), a daily meal and an emergency food pantry for those in need.

This year, we are expanding services to target Veterans in need. Lee County has identified food, shelter, and medical care as the top needs for Veterans. No funds are provided to the client directly. Clients receiving assistance are enrolled in our Budget classes and are asked to "give back" by volunteering with the Beacon's many volunteer opportunities. Our program is able to work with these clients to prioritize needs and resources and as a team work towards each solution.

Veterans' problems are complex and we use every available resource to help solve their needs. But, each veteran and their families are an active part of the solution. Our veterans are not managed by staff, but work as a team establishing goals and responsibilities. Veterans have taught us that we need to work with them and their families. The Beacon of Hope has proven its ability to do this and achieve lasting changes that help individuals and their family be self-sufficient.

Jane Bennington
President, Beacon of Hope Pine Island



St. John's, Tampa

Faith Café, A partnership with South Tampa Ecumenical Ministries

The Faith Café is a program that was developed to feed our neighbors in need. The South Tampa Ecumenical Ministries (STEM), a collaboration of seven local South Tampa churches, has joined forces with Metropolitan Ministries in an effort to feed those who may be homeless, in financial straits, or otherwise in need of a hot meal.

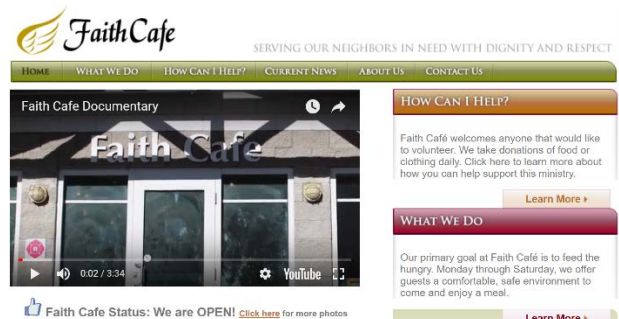
Monday through Saturday, we offer guests a comfortable, safe environment to come and enjoy a meal. Our volunteers are trained to treat our guests with the respect and love they deserve. One way we show our respect is to hear their stories and learn their names. In addition, in the spirit of service, we serve our guests plates of food and a drink of their choice, as if they are in a restaurant. There is no buffet line and we make sure volunteers do all the clean up. When everyone has been fed, we clean the "restaurant" in preparation for welcoming new guests the next day.

Another goal of this ministry is to distribute lightly used clothing, blankets, coats, toiletries and other essential items. Every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, a volunteer works in our "Angel Closet" to sort and offer these materials to our guests. We accept all types of donated clothes and if we cannot use an item, we donate it to a facility that we know will use it. No item goes to waste. No donation is too small. Every little bit helps.

Finally, we look forward to meeting the needs of our community by supporting guests and getting them information on other resources in Tampa. Different people have different needs, so we keep current information related to shelters, family resources, health related resources, and other organizations that support our guests in ways that we cannot. Our volunteers make an effort to form relationships with guests. The volunteers are aware of the resources available and pay close attention to the needs of certain guests. Referrals to other organizations are offered on a case-by-case basis.

St. John's coordinates approximately 20 faithful volunteers on the third and fourth Fridays of each month. Volunteers prepare food, pick up food donations from Metropolitan Ministries and Starbucks, set up the dining room, serve food, wash dishes and clean up. In addition to serving lunch Monday - Saturday, volunteers now serve an evening meal on Sundays, 5:00 - 6:00 p.m. Beginning last summer Faith Café opened a mobile shower unit allowing up to 16 guests the opportunity to take a shower Monday, Wednesday or Friday.

Mary Jane Schenck and
Sally Wiley
Ministry Leaders



St. Nathaniel's, North Port All Faiths Food Bank Partnership

St. Nathaniel's works with All Faiths Food Bank to distribute food including fresh fruit and vegetables to the needy of the North Port community. Attached are some photos which were taken yesterday.

The numbers we served in 2017 through All Faiths Food Bank: 24 times (twice a month), average of 125 people picking up food, with 304 household members including 74 under the age of 18. We reach over 600 people each month.

The photos show the parishioners packing the dry food bags, and the fruit and vegetables stacked and ready for hand out. When the fruits and vegetables are picked up, the person goes into the parish hall to pick up the dry food bag.

All the people in bright lime green or orange shirts are members of St. Nathaniel's.

St. Nathaniel's has been participating in the food distribution program for more than 5 years.

Donna Francisco
Senior Warden



Redeemer, Sarasota Day of Hope

We hosted Day for Hope on 22 July 2017. We were able to help over 200 at-risk children and youth prepare for their first day of school in the new year, helping them to enter the school year on a level playing field. Such an effort requires strong financial commitment as well as hundreds of volunteers, drawing in not only members of the parish but also from our community. This program provides medical and dental exams for each child, a haircut, framed individual and family photos, a nutritious hot meal, a backpack filled with school supplies, bags of food and sundries, and gift cards for clothing and shoes. Church of the Redeemer was the second church in Sarasota to host a Day of Hope 7 years ago in 2011.

"Once a year, for seven years, right before the start of school, 250 or so volunteers at the Church of the Redeemer help to equip 250 or so at-risk children for their first day of school. Many of the children are homeless and all are living below the poverty level. On the Day for Hope, children and their families receive a delicious breakfast. The children have their hair cut; have general medical, dental, and eye examinations; are given backpacks with school supplies and a Bible; meet with one of the clergy, and are invited to church. The family has a photograph taken by a professional photographer, and are given lunch. It is a tremendous undertaking which takes months of preparation and a great deal of organization. Most of the volunteers are members of the parish, but not all; many come from the general community. For many of our volunteers, this is their way of taking their place at COR. They continually share very moving stories of families who benefit from this effort, and how pleased they have been to be able to serve those in need.

Day for Hope is one of our greatest forms of outreach to the community each year. Through it, the loving arms of our Lord Jesus Christ reach out to the neediest in our community and enable the children to begin school on as much of a 'level playing field' as possible."

The Rev. Fred Robinson. Rector

The Rev. Christian Wood
Associate Rector



Lamb of God, Fort Myers

Feeding the 5000, Our Thanksgiving Mission

Thanksgiving is a time we set aside to show our thanks for all of the wonderful things the world has to offer. It's a time to celebrate by sharing a traditional meal with family and friends.

However, Thanksgiving is not a time of plenty for many families in Southwest Florida. Even taking part in the traditional Thanksgiving meal can put a strain on their finances.

With this in mind, Lamb of God Church began providing meals at the church for a few people who were alone on Thanksgiving or who had some difficulty providing a Thanksgiving meal for themselves and their family. The joy of helping others encouraged the team to expand their Thanksgiving outreach, and they soon began to deliver meals to those in need who weren't part of the church family.

In 2007, the mission had provided 800 meals to families in need; but, with the financial crisis in 2008, more people needed help, and many organizations could no longer afford to provide that help. The growing need inspired the Lamb of God mission; and, working with volunteers from the community, they were able to grow the meals they provided to 3,200.

The following year, the team adopted the biblical name "Feeding the 5000" and, through innovation and the spirit of giving that Jesus taught us, has more than fulfilled the commitment in their new name. Over the next 9 years, "Feeding the 5000" cooked over 4,000 turkeys, prepared over 40 tons of side dishes and provided over 60,000 meals to families in need.

What started out as a small congregation feeding a few people at Thanksgiving has grown into a community effort, led by Lamb of God Church, that provides the largest Thanksgiving outreach in SW Florida. What started out as a few church volunteers has grown into over 700 community volunteers (including over 250 young volunteers) taking time out from their busy schedules each year to help others.

Many of the same volunteers come back year after year. Surely the thought of providing meals to families in need inspires them to come back and help. Helping others also brings out the best in people and there is something special about the atmosphere created by so many people all at their best. So, Feeding the 5000 not only provides needed meals to struggling families, it helps young people learn the joy of helping others and also provides a spiritual uplift that is sometimes hard to find in today's world.

Wendy Smith
Director of Operations



St. Michael & All Angels, Sanibel Comprehensive Strategy for Outreach

-The **St. Michael's Grants Committee** oversees the distribution of grants from the \$180,000 proceeds from Noah's Ark Thrift Shop and the \$60,000 allocated from the budget by the Vestry.

-Each year we have a **Mission Fair** and invite 25 agencies/charities to church so that everyone has an opportunity to see where they might want to volunteer. Many people volunteer at many places. The Outreach Team is responsible for the Mission Fair and all the drives - each year there are different agencies selected.

-The Youth Group, in conjunction with the Outreach Ministry, sponsors three drives a year: This year Advent was for needy senior citizens, Epiphany Drive was 500 hooded sweatshirts for the Immokalee Farmworkers, and Lent was diapers and hygiene items for Immokalee. During each drive, things are laid at the altar and it looks fantastic as it piles up!

-We work very closely with FISH (Friends In Service Here) on the island - a food pantry that serves 2,500 people a year and also helps with job searches, resume writing, walkers, wheelchairs, etc.

-Once a month, a group works at the South Ft. Myers Food Pantry

-Once a month, a group works at CCMI's Everyday Cafe (lunches for 400-500 people)

-Plate offerings on Good Friday go to The Church in Jerusalem

-Plate offerings at Christmas go to Harry Chapin Food Bank

-Plate offerings at Easter go to the scholarship fund we have for kids and adults to further their education

-Donations from Shrove Tuesday pancake supper go to the Pine Manor After-School program

-The **Matthew 25 Fund** established by parishioners 10 years ago distributes about \$900 a year. The Fund's income is for outreach beyond the Parish budget, e.g. for a start-up program, a disaster need, a special one-time boost to an agency. Parishioners may contribute to the Endowment component or to the current programs or to both.

The Rev. Dr. Ellen Sloan

Rector



St. Mark's, Venice Community Dinner Program

In 2008 St. Mark's Outreach Committee decided to look at the resources available in our community for those in need. It didn't take long for them to realize that there was a food desert in South Sarasota County. We had a homeless population that was ignored and senior citizens who were choosing between food and medications.

That was the birth of the Community Dinner program. St. Mark's was and still is the driving force of what is now "Interfaith Outreach, Inc." During 2017 this volunteer organization provided hot meals once a week to community members in need. The dinners rotated among four host sites – St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Venice United Church of Christ (meals prepared at The Jewish Congregation of Venice), Grace United Methodist Church, and Emmanuel Lutheran Church.

Chefs served at a total of 49 dinners providing meals to 2,313 guests in 2017. That represents an average of 47 guests per dinner at a cost of \$2.08 per guest including second helpings. The total cost of food was \$4,800 excluding donations. Ten different faith communities provided fresh fruit at each dinner - also on a rotating basis.

Our guests are truly appreciative of the meals we provide. In addition to nourishing food, each weekly meal also includes the opportunity for the guests to socialize with our volunteers and each other. There is a real sense of community and fellowship as you walk around each dining hall and listen to the conversation. A two-way trust has developed as a result of listening to and caring for each other.

Sandy Albanese
Parish Administrator



Iona Hope, Fort Myers

After School Program for Children of Low Income Families

Iona-Hope is located in a Hispanic, low income area and all the children attending our program benefit from this quality program. We provide an educational and safe environment while their parents (mainly single) finish their day's work. The goal of this program is to give parents peace of mind that their children are in a safe Christian environment and we will be supporting their educational needs.

As of right now we have approximately 28 volunteers from our congregation and the community participating in this project. We have no paid staff, this has been solely funded by Iona-Hope and donations from the congregation and the community. As this is a new program the startup cost has outweighed our donations received from the church and community.

Within the next few years we are hoping that this program can become a budgeted outreach program and that we do not have to rely entirely on incoming contributions.

To start this program, we are requesting a \$10 donation per week per child to help cover the snacks. We are estimating that educational materials, snacks and other items will cost \$5 per child per day and we are starting with 12 children. The donations from these low income parents cannot begin to cover these costs.

Our long term vision is to expand this program to benefit more children of need in this community. The After School Program will run Monday – Friday from 2:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on the days our local schools are open only. Our ultimate vision for the future is to purchase our own bus and have more classroom space. This will allow us to become an intricate support system to enrich the lives of these children.

Donna Kress

Lay Minister of After School Program



St. Vincent, Clearwater

The Christian Mercy Challenge and Thrift Shop

The Christian Mercy Challenge was an initiative begun during Lent of 2017 when we asked as a parish how we might go back to the basics of charity. We wanted to answer Christ's call to: feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, and visit the sick and imprisoned. Our most successful project was providing Daystar Life Center, which works with homeless and low income clients with basic needs and referrals to services in their community, with a water bottle refill station. We also gave them more than 200 refillable stainless steel water bottles. This meant cutting cost on purchasing so many plastic bottles and helped hydration which is a major issue among the working poor.

The Rev. Alex Andujar
Rector



For over 40 years the St. Vincent's Thrift Shop has been serving the Gulfport area of St. Petersburg Florida. Patrons come from miles away for the wide selection and best deals. But what keeps people coming back are the smiles of our volunteers. The thrift shop is a wonderful opportunity to support the outreach and evangelism ministries of St. Vincent's Episcopal Church. Come by Monday to Saturday from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.



Trinity by the Cove, Naples

Three Year Outreach Grant Cycle

The Community Grant Commission has been delegated by the Vestry of Trinity as one of the major distribution vehicles for the outreach funds of the parish. Every year, funds raised by the Women of Trinity, Olde Naples Arts and Entertainment, and The Art of Giving are assigned to the Commission for distribution to non-profit organizations in Collier County. This year, the Commission was given authorization to grant \$154,626 to fourteen agencies in Collier County.

To ease the annual workload and to maximize individual grants, the total approved non-profit pool of about 50 agencies is divided into three categories with a three-year cycle. This year's category was Mental Health, Shelters, and Exceptional Services. Our working year began in December 2016 and ran through May 2017. All existing documents and forms were reviewed and, where necessary, updated in electronic format. Agencies on the approved list were contacted and asked to apply for new grants. In addition, several new agencies applied for consideration. They were then interviewed and added to the list.

After the applications were received and reviewed, teams of Commission members conducted site visits for all applicants. Site reports, including final recommendations, were then reviewed by the entire Commission, and the Commission's final recommendations were presented to the Vestry. Upon approval, notification letters and checks were sent to each of the fourteen agencies.

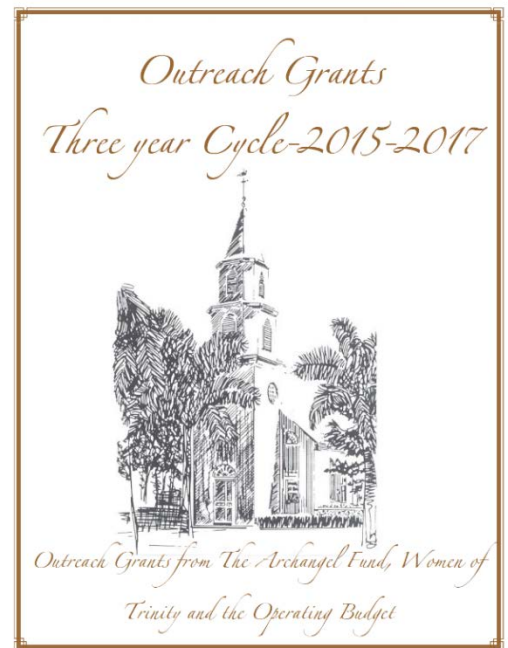
The members of the Commission would like to thank each member of the parish who contributed time, talent, and treasure toward raising the funds that the Commission was able to distribute.

Tony Urick
Community Grant Commission Chair

Celebrating Our Grant Recipients

View a list of charities Trinity-by-the-Cove supports.

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW](#)



Three Year Cycle

2017 Mental Health, Shelters and Exceptional Service

Avow Hospice
Coalition of Immokalee Workers
David Lawrence Center
Guadalupe Center
Hunger & Homeless Coalition of CC
Immokalee Housing & Family Services
Mental Health Assoc. SWFL
National Alliance of Mental Health
St. Matthew House
Shelter for Abused Women & Children
TECH
Voices for Kids
Youth Haven

2016 Child Protection, Advocacy & Education

AMI Kids
Books for Collier Kids
Champions for Learning
Charity for Change
Children's Advocacy Center
Collier Child Care Resources
Friends of Foster Children Forever
Fun Time Early Childhood Academy
Help a Diabetic Child
Immokalee Child Care Center
Laces of Love
Pace Center for Girls, Inc.
New Horizons of Southwest Florida
Redlands Christian Migrant Association
Salvation Army
Young Life

2015 Physical Health & Development

Baby Basics
Collier Harvest
Easter Seals/Florida
Grace Place
Harry Chapin Food Bank
Healthcare Network of SW Florida
Lighthouse of Collier, Inc.
Naples Equestrian Challenge
Neighborhood Health Clinic
Parkinson's Association of SW Florida
Project Help, Inc.
Senior Friendship Centers
Sunlight Homes