

ST. STEPHEN'S SPIRIT

The Newsletter of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Wilkinsburg PA

NOVEMBER 2020

Wilkinsburg Community Ministry: We Share Food

submitted by Ruth Kittner

WCM provides food for neighbors in Wilkinsburg, Edgewood, Swissvale, and parts of Homewood. [In 2019 we had an average of 200 neighbors per month at the pantry. Since March 2020 we have helped an average of 500 people per month, although that last week of March and the first week of April, the number was closer to 500 households a week. The average household is 2.5 people. We have distributed well over 90,000 pounds of food in the first three quarters of the year, and 60% of it is fresh food.](#)

At the end of 2018 we redefined our service area. It includes all of Wilkinsburg (15221), all of Edgewood and Swissvale, and parts of East Homewood. Basically, if you create a circle following Braddock to Bennett to Frankstown Road, to Laketon to Graham, cross under 376, bordered on the south by Woodstock, back to Braddock Ave. The service area was created using similar census tracts. Although clearly there are populations in that area that we wouldn't expect to need a food pantry, it's surprising who is living on the edge of food security. Basically, our zip codes are 15221, 15218, and parts of 15208 and 15235 that are adjacent to Wilkinsburg. This also reflects the populations of the Congregations that offer regular and sustaining support for WCM.

Fresh food from the grocery stores and the Food Bank is near the end of its edible life. Food that is at peak ripeness that we cannot distribute is processed by a local chef and offered to our neighbors as apple butter, raspberry jams, etc. We have also composted over 3,000 pounds of spoiled produce. Composting food waste helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The compost we make is used to grow food locally. Occasionally we get too much of an item (once it was 1000 pounds of bananas).

Wilkinsburg Community Ministry was founded in 1968 by local congregations fearful that Lyndon Johnson's Great Society was passing over Wilkinsburg. As part of our mission, we have provided over the years a variety of programs focused on improving the quality of life for our neighbors. These have included summer camps, tutoring, energy assistance, ESL programs, GDE programs, various food programs, Meals on Wheels, after school enrichment programs, and childhood and adult nutrition programs. Many of these have been picked up and carried forward by other agencies, leaving us free to spearhead new neighborhood initiatives. In January 2020 the board had decided to focus its efforts solely on the food pantry. Families may come twice a week for enough food for 2-3 days. This supplements the food assistance they receive from SNAP and other programs. We encourage healthy eating, including lots of fresh veggies. Families are offered a choice: generally, we don't pack boxes and hand them out.

We are supported by donations from community members, congregations, and foundation and corporate grants. We are a member of the Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank's network of pantries and, in fact, one of the few that could remain open during the spring closure of schools, churches and businesses.

The pantry is open 9-1 Monday through Friday, although closed for some Federal and religious holidays. We are considering expanded hours beginning in January and will be looking for volunteers to help us 2-3 evenings a week.

Mission of the Month:
NOVEMBER 2020
Shepherd's Heart

Shepherd's Heart ministers to the poor, vulnerable and homeless downtown.
Please look at their website at Shepheart.org

If you'd like to donate, you can write a check to "Shepherd's Heart" and place it in the offering plate on Sundays.

Every year WCM shares at least 100 turkeys plus the trimmings to our neighbors at Thanksgiving and again at Christmas. Trimmings includes and either fresh or frozen green beans, potatoes, sweet potatoes, onions, peas, beans, corn bread mix, and a dessert mix. We try to include a dozen eggs per family, plus a variety of dessert items. The volume of trimmings is commensurate with the size of the family.

Families sign up in advance for either Thanksgiving or Christmas. Sign up for the Thanksgiving Distribution of Turkey cards plus the Trimmings will start October 24 (United Nations Day) and continue until we have 100 families or November 1 (All Saints Day), which ever happens soonest. Sign up for Christmas will start after Thanksgiving.

The Thanksgiving distribution will occur at 704 Wood Street on Monday-Wednesday, November 23, 24, and 25, but will end promptly at 11:30 on the 25th so WCM staff can leave at noon to prep for their own holidays.

FOOD OF THE MONTH

NOVEMBER

Did you know that 25% of Wilkinsburg residents are food insecure? Let's help our neighbors by contributing to the Wilkinsburg Community Ministry holiday meal bags.

Boxes of stuffing mix

Cans of green beans

Cans of corn

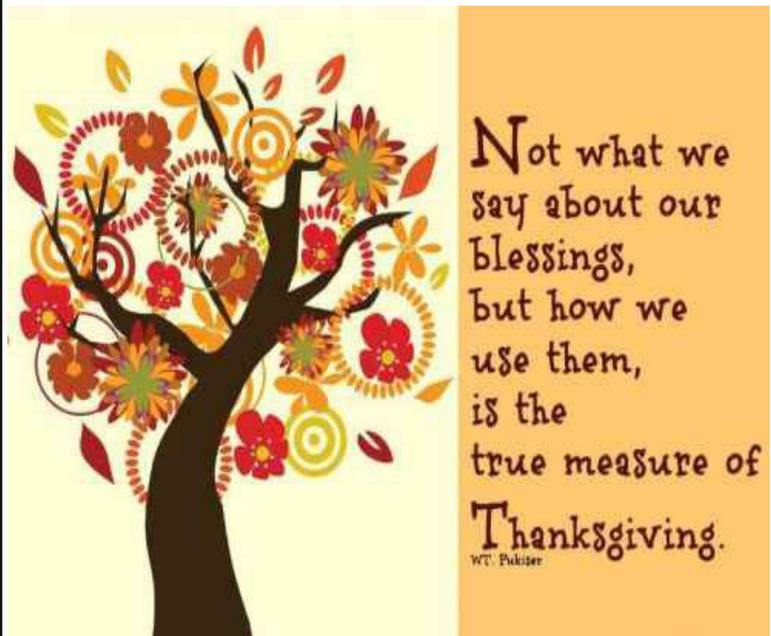
Cans of cranberry sauce

Cans of sweet potatoes

Boxes of corn bread mix

Boxes of dessert mix

Giant Eagle gift cards



Please put donations in the boxes in the back of the church. Thank you!!

During November

We pray for those

In hospice care,

With diabetes,

With Alzheimer's.



NOVEMBER EVENTS

Birthdays: Nov. 1 Patty Schillero, Nov. 18 Kay Romey,
Nov. 19 Bishop McConnell, Nov. 28 Darlene Bradley

Get the latest news from the
Episcopal news service at;
episcopalnewsservice.org

**Please remember to
bring your pledge up to
date if possible**



How do we as Episcopalians live out
our faith as Christians? Join our Zoom meeting!

Thursday Discipleship 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm

Contact Father Chuck or Melanie Sprenkel with
questions

STEWARDSHIP

The Stewardship Campaign, this year, will consist of one letter, which you should receive the first week of November. It is very important that you respond by returning your "Estimate of Giving" card to the church office by Friday, November 20 or by bringing it with you to church on Sunday, November 22. That will be the day of our "In Gathering," and we will give thanks for your continued support of our beloved church and our many programs that reach out to those in need.

UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

Nov. 1 ALL SAINTS DAY, Nov. 11 VETERANS DAY, Nov. 22 STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY,

Nov. 26 THANKSGIVING DAY, Nov. 29 FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

WELCOME BACK EVERYONE
YOUR SUNDAY MORNING LITURGY
HAS RESUMED
8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

PRAY FOR VETERANS AND MILITARY MEN AND WOMEN

Almighty God, we commend to your gracious care and keeping all the men and women of our armed forces at home and abroad. Defend them day by day with your heavenly grace; strengthen them in their trials and temptations; give them courage to face the perils which beset them; and grant them a sense of your abiding presence wherever they may be; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Contact Us

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 Sunday Worship 8AM & 10:30AM
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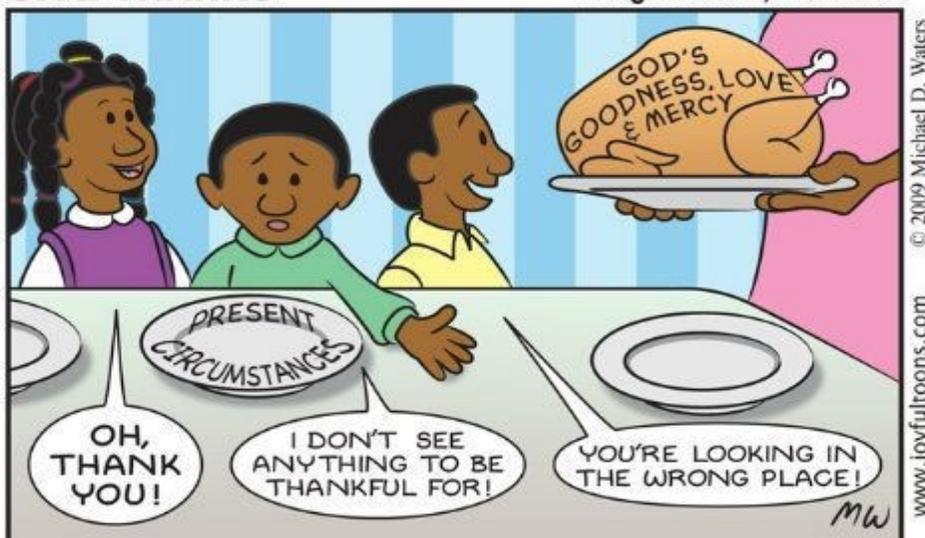
www.ststephenswilkinsburg.org

Parish Staff

Rev. Chuck Esposito Priest in charge
 Soon Choi, Dir of Music Ministry
 Melanie Sprengel, Parish Ministry Coordinator
 Gerry Dalton, Financial Admin
 Tim Brucker, Sexton
 Gary Glasser, Archivist & Historian

GIVE THANKS

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



Praise the LORD. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. — PSALM 106:1 NIV

PRAYER CYCLE BOOKS

Please join us in praying for the members and committees of St. Stephens

You can pick up a copy at the main door and chapel door.

