

Big Impact Giving by St. Michael's

As many of you know, we have been on a journey to give a significant amount of our reserve funds to organizations in our area who are able to make an impact on the lives of those in need. And the funding goes to:

- River City Food Bank,
- Women's Empowerment, and
- Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center.

Here is the whole story

Our story of big giving to make a big impact!

St. Michael's has built up significant reserves. Many years ago, we were blessed with a property donation (Wagon Tree Ranch) which was eventually sold and the proceeds began a fund that has grown over the years. We have also been blessed by many legacy gifts which contributed greatly to our reserves. We have a long history of being careful financially. As a result, we have often ended our fiscal year with surplus income that has been added to our reserves. With the stock market doing so well in 2020 and 2021, our reserve funds grew to a point that our treasurer at that time, Bob McMichael, wondered what the purpose was for our reserve funds? He wondered if as a church, we should be using some of them to help those in need (as the Gospel says). We brought these questions to the Vestry.

The Purpose of Reserve Funds:

The first step was to determine the purpose of our reserve funds. We met with Josh Anderson from the Episcopal Church Foundation for some guidance on setting up a policy for our reserve funds. We identified (4) purposes of the funds:

1. FOR CASH FLOW (KEEPING AT LEAST 4-6 MONTHS IN RESERVES).
2. FUTURE AND EMERGENCY CAPITAL EXPENSES.
3. MISSION EXPANSION ABOVE AND BEYOND OUR BUDGET UNDER EXTRAORDINARY OPPORTUNITIES.
4. IMPACT GIVING

Impact Giving

This made it clear to the vestry that we were able to give a significant amount away to those in need and still be financially responsible.

When we looked at the policy and the financial situation of St. Michael's, the Vestry voted to make \$100,000 available for impact giving using a process that was first developed by Betsy Stone, a member and experienced strategist. The process was refined by a group of vestry

members and members from Mercy and Social Justice (Deacon Cindy, John Jervis, Mary Ellen Ferguson, Eileen Thomas, Pamela Lueders, and Rev. Mary).

We considered organizations that were involved in these identified areas:

1. *immediate food needs,*
2. *shelter/housing needs, or*
3. *mental health needs.*
4. *A fourth category, Afghan refugees, should be included as a population with urgent and specific needs.*

Members from Mercy & Social Justice, the Vestry, and Clergy (6 members in all) gathered to identify organizations that met this criteria, additionally seeking names from the congregation. We selected five organizations and invited each to submit a short-form fund proposal. All five responded with an application. The group re-gathered to evaluate the applications and rank them on predetermined criteria and presented this with our ranking to the vestry. I am delighted to announce the organizations the Vestry voted to award funding are:

- **River City Food Bank**, a longtime partner of St. Michael's.
- **Women's Empowerment**, and
- **Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center**.

We look forward to building a bigger and better relationship with Women's Empowerment and Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center, looking for ways to offer our members opportunities to get involved and volunteer at these two organizations as we do at River City Food Bank!

This was an amazing journey which is not ending with the awarding of the checks, but beginning with new possibilities for each of us to grow more in love.