Episcopal Community Services of the Diocese of New Jersey (ECS-NJ)

September, 2024

Strengthening Our Faithful Service Together

"Almighty God, you have poured upon us the new light of your incarnate Word: Grant that this light, enkindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen." (BCP, pg. 213)

A Story of Faith in Action by Catherine Ambos



How does a congregation remain involved in a ministry when it moves off-site? Christ Church operated a food pantry for over 30 years, first in the basement and later in the social room during the pandemic. In 2021, after many discussions with the City of New Brunswick and the Feeding New Brunswick Network, Christ Church partnered with Emanuel Lutheran Church and Catholic Charities' Unity Square to create the New Brunswick Choice Food and Resource Center. With support from ECS-NJ, we transitioned to serving from Unity Square, located in one of the most impoverished areas of New Brunswick. The new location, fully accessible and designed for a choice food pantry, was an improvement in many ways. However, it posed challenges in maintaining volunteer involvement, as the pantry's new hours did not align with the availability of many Christ Church volunteers.

After church on Sunday, August 18, parishioners at Christ Church New Brunswick enjoyed fellowship and renewed their hands-on involvement with this vital ministry. Beyond food distribution, the Christ Church Food Pantry had developed a vibrant program that provided diapers and wipes for babies, as well as sanitary products for women—initiatives that began when a volunteer raised the issue after a session. Although we carried this program over to the Choice Food and Resource Center, without our Christ Church volunteers who would occasionally help bag diapers and sanitary supplies, the task fell largely to one dedicated family. This summer, that burden was joyfully lifted when parishioners stopped by after the service to enjoy coffee, pastries, and packing! Thanks to their efforts, diapers for more than 80 babies and sanitary supplies for over 400 women are now ready for distribution!

Canon Paul and Catherine Ambos organized the chaos delivering the finished project to Unity Square before the August 20 distribution.

Parishioners involved in the day's activities

Photo 1: The Rev. Daphne Roberts, Dcn., and Suzanne McDonald, Music Director, Photo2: Marva Van Loo, Pat Buckendahl, Penny Gordon, and The Rev. Joanna Hollis, Photo 3: Canon Paul Ambos





Other parishioners not shown included: Tabby Fenn, Joanna Gunther, Stephen Greenwood, Warden Mark McMahon, Vestrymembers Gordon Arsenoff and Jim Nichols, Church School Director Margaret Brown-Stansbury, Choirmember Zida Abbott, and Mary Lou Taylor

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Catherine Ambos, her husband Canon Paul, and all the dedicated volunteers who have given their time and energy to this important ministry.