

Dear St. Mark's Congregation,

The value of donating to a food bank is immeasurable, as it provides vital nutrition to our neighbors who require it most. When you're incorporating extra items into your grocery cart to donate to St. Mark's Food Bank, understanding what is acceptable for donation is crucial.

What Food You CAN Donate

St. Mark's Food Bank welcomes dry and canned food donations. These are mainly "shelf-stable" or nonperishable food items, those that can safely remain in your pantry without spoiling. Please ensure that donations are within their "sell-by" date. Notably, we request:

- Peanut butter and jelly
- Canned soup, fruit, vegetables, pasta sauce, stew, meat, chicken, fish, and beans
- Cereal and crackers
- Pasta (preferably whole grain) and Rice (preferably brown)

While the above is not exhaustive, it encompasses much of what we consistently require. St. Mark's Food Bank also accepts personal care items and some household essentials, since many families cannot afford these necessities and food assistance programs do not cover them.

Consider your pantry as an example of what to donate. Those dealing with hunger often lack the basic supplies that we take for granted. Even specialty items like olive oil, dressings, or marinades can be beneficial, provided they do not need refrigeration.

What NOT to Donate

Please avoid donating items that are perishable, i.e., with a limited shelf life if not refrigerated. Other non-donatable items include:

- Refrigerated items: we do not have the necessary freezer or refrigerator space to keep perishable items such as produce, dairy, and meat fresh.
- Expired food: Any food past its "use-by" or "sell-by" date is considered unsafe and should not be donated.
- Leftovers: As tempting as it may be to donate the surplus from large meals, food banks cannot accept or distribute leftovers.
- Food with packaging concerns: Do not donate foods with damaged packaging such as dented or bloated cans, items in glass containers, or items that have been opened.
- Baked goods: Due to food safety, we cannot accept food prepared in home kitchens as the ingredients and preparation processes are unverifiable.
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St. Mark's Food Bank makes a difference! You can help make that difference even greater by adhering to these guidelines. Together, we can ensure that all our neighbors have access to safe and nutritious food!

With gratitude for your generosity,

Stacey Richards, Chair,
St. Mark's Food Bank Team