

THE MESSENGER

ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS EPISCOPAL CHURCH



HOW YOU CAN HELP

- **Donate:** Items such as eggs, bread, canned goods, produce, and hygiene products
- **Volunteer:** There's a role for everyone.
- **Spread the word:** Share the story of this ministry with your community, church, or workplace.

EVERY MEAL MATTERS: INSIDE ST. PAUL'S SATURDAY MORNING MINISTRY

An inside perspective from co-leader Cathy Jackson & volunteer Sophia Stockton

By Jack Welker

Every Saturday morning, long before most alarms ring, a small army of volunteers gathers at St. Paul's Episcopal Church with one mission: to feed our community with kindness & dignity.

What started 26 years ago as the vision of Julie Marcus from her group project in Education for Ministry (EFM), has since become a weekly tradition of food and friendship. Event co-leader Cathy Jackson explains, "Julie thought that she just saw so many people homeless, this is 25 years ago, and that's still true today. But Julie noticed a lot of people just barely getting by with food, and she thought she could do something."

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ST. PAUL'S MINISTRY IN KCK (cont'd.)

Through partnerships with Harvesters, KC Nourish, and donations from local grocers such as Price Chopper, volunteers now serve hot meals, offer bags of pantry items, and distribute fresh produce along with bakery treats to families across the metro. But behind the logistics is a deeper story of connection.

"It's a chance to step outside of your bubble," says volunteer Sophia Stockton, who's been showing up for morning shifts the past two years. "You meet people you wouldn't normally cross paths with, and that moment, just listening, laughing, handing someone a warm plate—it grounds you."

Sophia recalls one morning last winter that made a lasting impression. "It was snow on the ground, we were out here still, and . . . you know, it was kind of eye-opening to see how many people still came, that didn't have cars, that came up with little wagons, and they're bundled up as best they could be . . . then you know that they really need these items, they really need this bit of help from whoever's willing to give it," she said.

St. Paul's Breakfast, which transitioned to a drive-through format during the COVID-19 pandemic, now feeds nearly 300 people each week. Volunteers work in shifts: early risers prep the food beginning at 6:30 a.m., while others greet families and hand out meals between 8:30 and 11 a.m. The hot breakfasts are hearty and comforting—eggs, potatoes, the occasional surprise from the bakery aisle—and grocery bags provide much-needed essentials for the week ahead.



BREAKFAST AT ST. PAUL'S (cont'd.)

Event co-leader Cathy Jackson has seen the program evolve through pandemics, shortages, and changing community needs. “It feels like hard work,” she says, “but very rewarding hard work. I feel like the need never goes away. And so it's a little piece of passing on the abundance that my life has. I like to make sure that I feel like I'm giving just a little bit back.”

One of her most vivid memories involves an unexpected moment of support—what she calls her “SOS” or “Save Our Saturday” list: “Today’s event was actually wondering whether I was going to have enough people and sending out a few notes about midweek . . . and people replied and said, yes, of course I can come. So today, I have no stress. There are plenty of helping hands, and that means everything's going to be great.”

The team has also had to get creative in the face of rising food costs. At the height of the egg shortage, volunteers found themselves scrambling—sometimes literally—to meet the week’s goal of 30 dozen eggs, which is essential for feeding over 250 guests a hot breakfast. Cathy recalls that each volunteer would buy up what they could, and then improvise with extra milk, butter, and seasoning when the shelves ran bare. “Yeah, the egg shortage was fun,” she quipped, laughing about the kind of hard work that keeps our community fed.

And while the team serves fewer people today than in the past, Cathy’s concern reaches deeper than the numbers. “We had peaked at about 400 individuals being fed,” she said. “And we have noticed in the last month we're down about a hundred people... I think it's because many, many of the people that come through are Spanish-speaking, possibly undocumented, and they're just hiding out right now. I hope they'll return. I don't want this to be a place where they feel threatened.”

ICONS OF LOVE AND LEGACY AT ST. MICHAEL'S

By Marty Pyle

Over the past few years, I've had the distinct honor of "writing" several icons for the faithful community of Saint Michael's—each one a prayerful gift, steeped in tradition and love. The first icon I ever wrote was of Christ, commissioned by Father Gar Demo, current rector of St. Thomas the Apostle, as a parting gift to the people of Saint Michael's. It was a humbling and holy beginning to my journey into the sacred art of iconography.

Later, Reverend Lisa Senuta—now the Canon for Spiritual Life and Clergy Care for our diocese—asked me to write an icon of Mary and the Christ Child. This tender image was given to Saint Michael's as a farewell gift when she was called to serve a parish in Illinois. Her commission was made possible, in part, by the generous gift of parishioner Sanna Cass.

Most recently, I had the joy of completing an icon of Saint Michael the Archangel, a gift from the Jean and Marty Pyle family. This powerful image now joins the others in reminding us of God's abiding presence, the communion of saints, and the beauty of sacred tradition. Each icon is more than an artwork—it's a window into the divine, a prayer in color and gold. I'm deeply grateful to have shared in this unfolding story of faith and love at STMAA.



GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

By Linda Brown

The journey of grief can bring so many feelings. Friends and family are well-meaning and supportive but may not understand what we are feeling. In our faith tradition, we look to the God who is with us, who sees us and hears us. In this group, we have the support and companionship of a small band of parishioners who are mourning, too. It is a safe place to be honest about grief and its impact on our lives.

Even with our busy schedules, we need to make room for our grief, to nurture our feelings, to practice our lament, to tend to our bodies, and to find comfort and support as we begin the journey of living courageously in the wake of the losses we bear. This group is a starting point.



GRIEF *Support Group*

HELP AND ENCOURAGEMENT AFTER THE
DEATH OF THE LOVED ONE

**Wednesdays starting
August 27th**

- 10 sessions
- 6-7:30 PM
- No cost, limited slots available
- Registration required

To register, contact Linda Brown
913-775-0384/lindabrown@lindabrown.us

UNDERSTANDING
YOUR
Grief
TEN ESSENTIAL TOUCHSTONES
FOR FINDING HOPE AND
HEALING YOUR HEART

GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP (cont'd.)

Grief groups are not magic. There are no words spoken in a group that will make your grief go away. Not every person will find a support group helpful, but groups like ours can provide a safe space to share feelings and experiences and to learn some touchstones and milestones along the journey. There's no right answer, but new ways of coping can emerge from a group.

This group is for you if:

- you can honestly say, "I am living with grief."
- you want validation that your experience of grief, unique as it, is still common—you are not crazy!
- you want to find role models who are living proof one can survive loss and live fully.
- you want a break from the loneliness and isolation that often come with grief.
- you think it might be helpful to hear how others cope and to share your own experience.
- you want to show empathy and kindness to others who are grieving, and to feel that kindness



No cost. Registration required.

**Call or email Linda Brown for information or to register 913.775.0384 /
lindabrown@lindabrown.us**

TORBECK THROUGH THE EYES OF JIM GRANT

Why He Keeps Going Back: Torbeck Through the Eyes of Jim Grant By Jack Welker

In a country too often reduced to headlines of violence and chaos, Jim Grant's story offers a different view—one defined not by fear, but by faith, resilience, and the unwavering power of community. As Executive Director of the Global Birthing Home Foundation, Jim Grant has returned to Haiti more than 80 times since 2008. His focus is the Maison de Naissance birthing center in Torbeck, on Haiti's southwest peninsula—a place he's committed his life to supporting, even as conditions across the nation have become increasingly dire.

"Most people just hear about Port-au-Prince," Grant said, "but that's not the whole country." While gangs have tightened their grip on the capital, much of rural Haiti continues to function peacefully, if not easily. Torbeck, though isolated, has become a beacon of hope. But getting there isn't simple. With roads blocked and the peninsula cut off from major ports, supplies must come through small aircraft or the black market. What's kept the birthing center alive, despite skyrocketing costs and supply shortages, is the sheer willpower of its Haitian staff.

"Our people are the reason we're still going," he explained. One facilities manager, also a lawyer, leverages his community ties to obtain fuel and resources when formal channels are no longer available.



TORBECK THROUGH THE EYES OF JIM GRANT (cont'd.)

The center's success is striking. To date, over 9,200 babies have been delivered without a single maternal death, a staggering record even by global standards. The key? A model built on continuity and compassion.

Expectant mothers receive consistent prenatal care from skilled midwives, forming bonds that reduce stress, improve outcomes, and restore dignity to the birthing process.

"The mother is not just a patient—she's treated like family," Grant emphasized. "And that changes everything."

Still, the challenges aren't just logistical. They're emotional. The influx of refugees from Port-au-Prince has overwhelmed regional care, and the departure of over half of Haiti's medical NGOs has left gaps too wide for any one organization to fill.

"People assume Haiti is a lost cause," he said. "But they only see the chaos. They don't see the gardens people are growing, the livestock they've raised, or the way neighbors care for each other."



TORBECK THROUGH THE EYES OF JIM GRANT (cont'd.)

Despite the headlines that often define Haiti to the American public, Jim Grant urges people not to let fear dictate their willingness to lend a hand.

“The media thrives on sensationalization,” he noted. “You can’t sensationalize good news very well.” While the violence in Port-au-Prince dominates coverage, Grant is quick to remind others that 99.9% of that unrest is confined to the capital. “The rest of the country—places like Torbeck—is peaceful, full of life, and filled with people just trying to live with dignity.”

Even amidst the challenges, he believes that small gestures of support often lead to a lasting impact. “If you can’t go there yourself,” he said, “you’re not going to get an accurate picture. But that doesn’t mean you can’t still care—or help.” Grant’s path into global health work wasn’t planned. For years, he’d built a successful IT career, earning well but feeling unfulfilled.

“I realized at some point that it was my career path that was making me miserable,” he admitted. It wasn’t until a chance meeting with one of Maison de Naissance’s founders, Dr. Stan Shaffer, that everything shifted. He took their advice, booked a trip to Haiti, and was immediately drawn in.

“I went for two weeks, and that was it. I was hooked,” he recalled. “I came back and talked him into giving me a job.” To find out more about the Global Birthing Home Foundation or to support their mission towards safe maternal care in Haiti, visit globalbirthinghomefoundation.org.



GRANDPARENTS FOR GUN SAFETY EVENT

SAVE THE DATE!

Mark your calendar for this event for concerned community members: the 12th Annual Grandparents for Gun Safety Community Forum

Monday, October 13th, 2025, 6 PM, at Rockhurst University

A panel discussion will tackle such issues as what role the faith community has in stemming the gun violence epidemic.

Surely there is at least one role, according to Grandparents for Gun Safety. Sadly, firearms deaths, whether homicide, suicide or accidents, continue plaguing our country. The group says that firearms are the #1 killer of children 17 and younger.

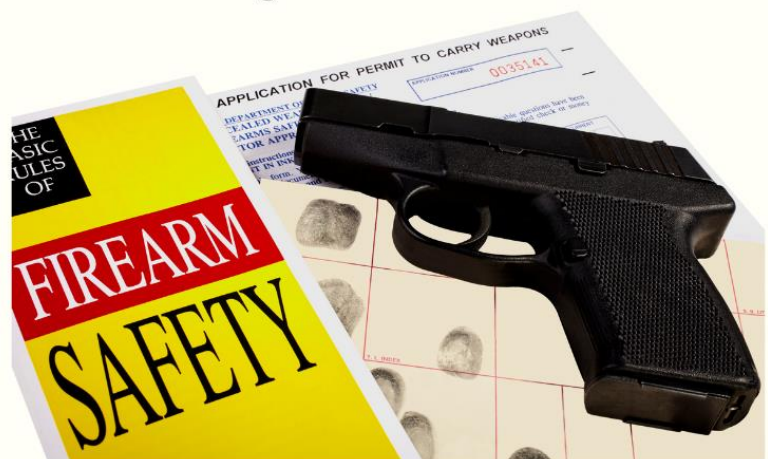
Faith may give comfort to survivors, but it requires action to prevent even more victims. Join us to learn the tools local faith leaders share to turn faith into action.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

John Pavlovitz, author and former youth pastor, with nearly one million social media followers, often speaks out about gun violence.

As he's posted: "If you pray for victims of gun violence, while doing nothing to stop their proliferation or to make them more difficult to get—your prayers may as well be bullets for the next mass shooting."

**For more information
about this event:
[www.grandparentsfor
gunsafety.org/12th-annual-
forum/](http://www.grandparentsfor
gunsafety.org/12th-annual-
forum/)**



FINAL THOUGHTS ON SUMMER



CHILDREN'S EVENT IN SPENCER HALL

Jane Wilson continued her tireless work with our parish's children this month, by leading the children in an activity where they all cut out wooden and paper butterflies, as well as learning how to create their own butterfly gardens at home. Thanks to Jane for continuing to lead our kiddos in these fun, educational opportunities!

**Celebrating
the baptism of
William Daniel
Kropf on
Pentecost at
STMAA**

