

Your monthly newsletter is here!

St Marks City Heights

January 2017



St. Mark's City Heights

Manos de Dios • We Are God's Hands

www.StMarks-CityHeights.org

Your Monthly News & Updates

Auld Lang Syne

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From Fr. Mac

In January of 1998 I sat in what was the late Rev. Lou Levinson's former office, a narrow storefront with a desk with a full ashtray of Fr. Lou's cigarette butts and a trash can near the desk with assorted fast food sandwich wrappers in it. I remember asking God what I should do. St. Marks was in this commercial building with a small congregation

of around twenty-five people. I had only served large congregations. I had the strong impression that God was telling me that it wasn't any different. People everywhere have the same needs.

The leadership and I agreed that a foundational premise for moving forward would be to trust God to take of our needs and that we would be focused on the needs of the neighborhood. While our journey has tested our faith several times, God has been faithful. But God has done it God's way.

Many of you that read this are the hands, minds, hearts and wallets that have had a hand in answering the call of God's Spirit to grow the response to the



need. Without you we would not be able to meet those needs. So I am grateful for all of you and give you our thanks and love for the privilege we have in working with you to care for the poor, the homeless and refugees.

Fr. Mac

For the third year in row St. Mark's was awarded an EFSP grant (Emergency Food and Shelters Program) through The United Way. On December 9 the San Diego Food Bank delivered over 300 cases of food for the pantry. Items included rice, peanut butter, canned chicken, beef stew, green beans and canned peaches. Students from the Psychology Department at Point Loma Nazarene University spent several hours that Friday afternoon sorting and stocking food. This grant helps us serve more clients with no economic impact on St. Mark's.



Due to hosting the shelter in December, the Neighborhood Food Cupboard was only open 2 1/2 weeks. In that short time we served 144 households with emergency food assistance. Of the 144 households served, 29 were first time visitors. The Neighborhood Food Cupboard will reopen on Jan. 11th. Our typical days/hours are Wednesdays and Thursdays from 12-2 PM. If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering, we're looking for more volunteers starting in February. Contact Heather Smith at stmarkscityheights@gmail.com for more information.



Refugee Tutoring Christmas Party

St. Mark's hosts refugee tutoring every Tuesday and Wednesday from 3:30-5 PM and welcomes students from Burma, Sudan, Syria and more. This Christmas The Bishop's School created wish lists for the kids and children enjoyed afternoons making paper chains and snowflakes,

eating special treats and going home with a gift specifically purchased for them. For several students it's their first

Christmas in America. If you'd like to learn more about ways you can support local refugees in 2017 please email stmarkscityheights@gmail.com. May all "strangers" experience a true, loving, hospitable welcome to this country, this state and specifically San Diego. It is up to us , each one, to make sure these new citizens are given every opportunity to succeed and to know that they are loved.



The Mobile Pantry gave away apples, sweet potatoes, tomatoes and pears in December. Clients appreciate the opportunity to get fresh fruits and vegetables as the quality and price of these items in City Heights often make them unattainable. The Mobile Pantry served 152 families in December.

Showers of Blessing

Hot showers truly are a blessing to our guests. Through the generous support of National University as well as community volunteers and donors, we offered the showers on Dec. 14th to 18 guests and on Dec. 24th to 20 guests. Joy Bredestege of HairbyJoy.com volunteered her time and talent and gave guests free haircuts, trims and shaves. Clients commented on how good it felt to be clean, warm and feeling "new." Donna Otten from Christ Church Coronado provided a nutritious breakfast for folks to enjoy while waiting for their shower. We continue to see this ministry grow and are looking forward to 2017. We are always in need of the following donations: travel-size hygiene items, clothing (washed, no holes or stains), hats, belts, socks, shoes, towels.



Interfaith Shelter

St. Mark's hosted the shelter from Dec. 18-Jan.1st. A huge thanks to the Shelter Committee (Julie Simons, Gary Smith,



Therese Carmona, Karen Herndon and Karen Kamy) who greeted the guests every evening and took care of every last detail to insure the guests had a positive, safe and hospitable experience. And a huge thanks to our partners at Christ Church Coronado who helped supply overnight hosts and meals throughout the two weeks. The guests ranged in age from 12 years old to seniors. They were respectful and appreciative and we continue to hope and pray that their circumstances improve in 2017 and that permanent shelter becomes a reality as soon as possible.



Christmas Eve Joy to the World Lunch

The third annual Joy to the World lunch was a huge success thanks to several churches and lots of volunteers. The morning started with showers and free haircuts. Meanwhile volunteers

were busy prepping food, setting up for lunch and preparing Christmas backpacks full of goodies for the guests. About 70 community folks were served a hot, holiday meal of turkey, ham, mashed potatoes, mac-n-cheese, salad, cranberries, rolls and pumpkin pie, all prepared by volunteer cooks. Christmas music filled the room and guests laughed and enjoyed a warm, safe place after a cold, wet night on the streets. Each guest received a new backpack with a blanket, t-shirt, socks, hand warmers, can opener, water and snacks. It truly is wonderful to help bring JOY to so many. One of the guests, Larry, commented to a volunteer that, "St. Mark's is my home. I know I am welcome here and can be myself." Our prayer in the new year is to continue to find ways to live out the gospel so that everyone who enters our doors knows they are loved, by us and by God. A special thanks to our partners from St. Bart's who helped start this ministry three years ago and continue to make it possible each year.



Adult Ed.- Opening into Presence, an exploration of meditative and contemplative practices to quiet the mind and open the heart is being offered as the next Adult Sunday School series starting on Sunday January 8 at 9 am and continuing over the next six weeks. Anne Curo will lead the sessions which are based on a curriculum developed by Judy Leshefka, a local Quaker practitioner. Whether or not you can attend the introductory class, feel free to drop in on any of the sessions to sample some of the wisdom traditions and techniques we will be exploring.

Schedule:

- Jan. 8 - Overview of meditative and contemplative practices in history
- Jan. 15 - Zen breathing and body prayer
- Jan. 22 - Standing yoga and centering prayer
- Jan. 29 - Lectio divina - praying with scripture
- Feb. 5 - Praying with sound
- Feb. 12 - Praying with the embodiment of all creation
- Feb. 19 - Contemplative prayer

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| <p>January 8
Adult Ed., 9 AM
Scrip Sunday</p> <p>January 11
Mobile Showers, 8:30 AM
Neighborhood Food Cupboard, 12-2</p> <p>PM
January 12
Neighborhood Food Cupboard, 12-2</p> <p>PM
January 14
Vestry, 9 AM</p> <p>January 15
Adult Ed., 9 AM</p> <p>January 18-19</p> | <p>January 21
Mobile Pantry, 8:45 AM</p> <p>January 22
Adult Ed., 9 AM
Newcomer's Brunch, 11:30 AM</p> <p>January 25-26
Neighborhood Food Cupboard, 12-2</p> <p>PM</p> <p>January 26
Mobile Showers, 9-11 AM</p> <p>January 29
Adult Ed., 9 AM
Annual Church Meeting, 11:30 AM</p> <p>January 30</p> |
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Neighborhood Food Cupboard, 12-2 PM

**Christ Church Coronado Spaghetti
Dinner**

STAY CONNECTED:



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