



Corpus Christi Parish

BOX 486 | 48 BELCHER ST | KENTVILLE, NS B4N 3X3

Report on Homelessness

Please provide an inventory of your parish community's charitable works that are particularly dedicated to those dealing with homelessness or home insecurity. For each ministry or project please include:

1. Name of Ministry
2. Short summary of their primary work
3. Number of People Involved
4. One issue related to homelessness that their members are seeing and hearing from those they serve

There are a number of initiatives happening in the churches in our Parish related to Homelessness, Food Insecurity and Poverty undertaken by volunteers at the individual churches. This is an inventory of the programs at the different churches grouped by ministry. In response to the items enumerated above, the list of ministries and their primary work along with information on the number of people involved and related issues follows:

Food Banks

Every church community in the Parish is involved with a local food bank. They collect non-perishable food, accept cash donations that are forwarded to the food bank and/or are directly involved in the operations of the food bank in their community.

St. Joseph Kentville hosts the Fundy Inter-Church Food Bank on its property. This is an ecumenical and community-wide endeavour to address food insecurity. It provides emergency food to those in need. A dozen regulars from various churches including a few from St. Joseph's volunteer. Approximately 200 people are helped each week. (Interesting statistics from May 2019: of the 174 people served that day, 70 were 18 years of age or younger ... 39% of the people were single and living alone).

St. Anthony in Berwick is part of an ecumenical and community-wide endeavor that provides emergency help in terms of food. Fifteen parishioners provide the core personnel of the food bank (which is not on the site of St. Anthony's). They serve, on average, 315 people per month. In Annapolis Royal, seven parishioners from St. Louis are regularly involved with the local community-based food bank supported by local churches. It provides food to those in need every other Wednesday and serves approximately 70 people per month, primarily single persons.



Parishioners from St. Joseph Weymouth support their community based food bank as well. It relies on donations from local churches and distributes food monthly or in emergencies. St. Patrick, Digby is also involved in its local ecumenical, community-wide food bank. Ten parishioners are involved and the food bank serves approximately 200 people per month.

St. Monica, Middleton is involved with the Twelve Baskets Food Bank, an ecumenical and community-wide endeavor situated in neighbouring Nictaux. About 12 parishioners, mainly members of the CWL and the Knights of Columbus, along with others are regular volunteers. Two members of St. Monica's sit on the executive and volunteer with food distribution. Approximately 150 requests for food are received each month.

Our parish churches hold regular collections of non-perishable food items and/or cash donations that go toward the local food bank. The food banks help bridge the gap for those who face housing insecurity due to low income and/or shortage of affordable housing resulting in too large a portion of their income being spent on housing. In Weymouth, fewer families used the service of the food bank after children's allowances were raised; single people are the majority of their clients. Lack of affordable, appropriate, housing results in little left for food. Assistance with food insecurity can help people avoid homelessness by bridging the gap. Other challenges also factor into the equation for those who need assistance with food: e.g. mental health, family breakdown. In communities with poor transportation infrastructure people may need food delivered. At St. Anthony 3 to 4 teams provide delivery of food to those in need. Covid has led to an increased need for delivery as many food bank clients rely on shared rides and this has not been possible during Covid leading to further food insecurity. Many clients at the food banks are single people; they may see a greater need for assistance with food since a larger percentage of their income goes to housing. In winter, increased costs for heat and electricity increase the need for food aid.

Projects/Programs

Inn from the Cold

Inn from the Cold offers overnight shelter to the homeless. It operates at Corpus Christi St. Joseph Kentville. The homeless are sheltered in the church hall and it operates seven nights/week. Prior to Covid, St. Joseph was responsible for hosting on Tuesday nights. Since Covid-19, it has been taking place in the lower hall of St. Joseph's Church seven nights/week.

There is one paid staff member who oversees the operation with 2 more assistants in the works. Dozens of volunteers from the community provide are involved. The service is used by up to four people each night.

Open Arms

Open Arms operates in Kentville and provides emergency and short-term help to those in need. This is also a drop-in centre which also provides a place to belong and to feel secure. This is not a



church-specific program, however the full-time staff and dozens of volunteers are connected to church – including a number from St. Joseph in Kentville. Open Arms assistance helps clients bridge the gap when they find it difficult to find affordable and appropriate housing.

Open Arms operates a weekday afternoon drop-in centre on-site at Corpus Christi St. Anthony Berwick for those who are lonely or lack the means for other social interaction. Six parishioners who attend St. Anthony are the main volunteers. Twelve to 25 people attend each day.

Community Kitchen/Soup Kitchens

Our Parish operates two community/soup kitchens, one at St. Monica in Middleton and the other at St. Patrick's in Digby. At St. Monica approximately 25 clients are served a soup and sandwich lunch each week. It also provides a turkey dinner at Christmas. In 2020, these programs pivoted to take out meals due to Covid. Those who visit the soup kitchen can also be directed to other resources for assistance, including winter clothing available on site. The program is delivered by the Knights of Columbus; the Knights and the CWL form the core volunteer group.

At St. Patrick's the Community Kitchen provides a meal to approximately 24 people each week. The program has expanded to help some recent immigrant families. This is an ecumenical effort located in St. Patrick's church hall. The United Church, Baptist and Salvation Army are also involved along with the Food Bank, Bethany Bin and Frenchy's.

Assisting School Aged Children

Through SSVP, St. Francis spearheads a Back to School program each year to ensure that children start the school year with the supplies they need to succeed.

Campaign for Kids is a Kings County-wide charity that aids under-privileged children and youth. Campaign for Kids was originally run by Community Services; it was started with \$200,000 seed money. This charity is well supported with involvement by parishioners who attend both St. Anthony's (Berwick) and St. Joseph's (Kentville).

The charity provides \$750/year to 14 schools (elementary & middle) for principals to discern need among students. It also provides \$2000 bursaries to graduating students at four high schools – one bursary for each high school. Campaign for Kids receives on average two requests per month from service groups for assistance, generally for medical and transportation related expenses and to help send children to summer camps. The charity is focused on helping individuals and families reach a normal standard of living in relation to others.

Parishioners from St. Anthony reach out to four local schools at Christmas and provide Christmas hampers to two families from each school. The school identifies the families who would benefit from this program, called the Angel Tree. The Angel Tree provides food and age/gender appropriate gifts. It is run by a team of 8 parishioners. This program helps families who have little left after meeting the cost of housing and utilities to ensure they can celebrate at Christmas.



Direct Financial Assistance

Funds are raised to assist those in need. Three of our churches have special funds that parishioners contribute toward (see below). Funds raised are used directly in that church's community to assist those in need with costs associated with day-to-day living including food, rent, utilities, prescriptions etc. These programs are administered by volunteers at each church.

St. John Windsor – Benevolent Fund

This initiative has one volunteer who is occasionally assisted by other parishioners for larger projects during the year (e.g. at Christmas). The Benevolent Fund occasionally works in collaboration with other local churches. 35 people/families were helped in 2020.

St. Joseph, Kentville – Christian Concern

This is managed by a priest and office administrator in collaboration primarily with the Salvation Army and occasionally some collaboration with local churches. On average, there are 12 food referrals/month and six other requests/month.

St. Francis, Wolfville – Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SSVP)

SSVP provides support in many forms: food, medical expenses, rent, power, heat and utilities. As well, it runs two annual projects: “Back to School” and a Christmas Sharing Tree. SSVP tries to “walk with” individuals (i.e. makes home visits). Twelve full-time members and seven auxiliary members work in collaboration with local churches. In 2020, assistance was provided to 107 adults and 99 children and volunteers visited 66 homes. Many of those the SSVP visits fear losing their homes – SSVP does their best to make sure they are able to stay!

Christmas Hamper Programs

Annual Christmas hamper programs happen at St. John, St. Francis, St. Joseph Kentville, and St. Anthony with each having its own traditions for collecting items and distributing these to families in need.

St. John has a “Giving Tree” where parishioners can select an anonymous child by age and gender for whom they provide a wrapped gift. The church's benevolent fund oversees Christmas giving to families in need.

St. Joseph in Kentville assembles hampers for families in need that include food for Christmas dinner and gifts for an entire family. They work in collaboration with Salvation Army and other local churches. St. Joseph Kentville distributes hampers to approximately 70 families each Christmas.

In Berwick, Corpus Christi parishioners at St. Anthony operate their Angel Tree program each Christmas that provides gifts and food hampers for eight families. (see [Assisting School Aged Children](#)).



Conclusion

Primarily, our parish provides assistance with food to the local community through community kitchens, food banks, Christmas hampers, etc. We also provide help with paying utility bills and rent in some instances. By providing direct assistance with utilities, or providing food through community kitchens and food banks, we can help bridge the gap for those who are precariously housed. People who can rely on these services to help them through the month face less risk of becoming homeless. There is a lack of affordable housing in the area for those with low incomes and those who are single and live alone may face greater challenges than households where there are two incomes. Single people may pay a greater proportion of their income in rent. Providing assistance with the cost of school supplies and giving underprivileged children opportunities for summer camp and further education has both short- and long-term goals. In the short term it can help them succeed in school so that they continue their education and over the long term it will increase their potential to succeed in the workplace and break the cycle of poverty and homelessness.