

Serving Commission

Food Pantry: Christ said, "Feed my lambs."

Grace's food pantry has grown over the last 20+ years from a small closet to a larger room with outside access and a separate storeroom. In 2015, we remodeled the Food Pantry and added new steel shelving to the Pantry and Storeroom thanks to your generosity and a matching grant from Second Harvest.

The Food Pantry at Grace Lutheran Church is one of several pantries that serve the general Oak Ridge Area. Families can come to our pantry once a month but may visit other pantries during that same month. The families from Anderson, Morgan and Roane counties come to our food pantry. Those whose income is below the poverty limit or those who participate in specific programs can also receive USDA food at no cost to our pantry. While the USDA food that is available is limited, we encourage our clients to try to qualify for USDA. The bulk of our food is obtained at reduced costs from Second Harvest of East Tennessee. Area churches (Kern Methodist, First Methodist, Faith Lutheran and First Cumberland Presbyterian) also provided food items during the year. In addition, we have a great working relationship with Hank's Market (at the former Food Lion location), who provided us with a very large amount of groceries from their "buy a bag for the hungry" holiday campaign.

In addition, the Boy Scouts of our own Troop 224 and Kern Methodist Troop 328 provided a huge supply of food during their spring community food drives. After volunteers sorted and checked dates, there was line of two layers of boxes lining the hallway in the original church basement! We also are thankful for donations of bread products from our local Panera's Bread each week.

The food supplied to each family is based on a basic nutritional menu; however, we are limited in the amount of meat products we can provide. We do follow Bill's tradition; cookies are always on the menu. The number of families and the individuals served in both 2016 and 2015 are given in the table below.

The cost of food distributed by our Food Pantry in 2016 was \$22,110 or an average of \$1,842 per month. This represents an average purchase cost of \$9.38 for every family that we served. That per family cost would be at least \$40 if bought at retail costs. We were blessed by contributions from Grace's members through Love Offerings and from other churches, e.g., Kern Methodist, First Methodist and First Cumberland Presbyterian Churches and various individuals. No funds are requested or received from Grace's operating budget.

The heart of our Food Pantry Ministry is the more than 24 volunteers, who staff the four Fridays each month and those from Kern Methodist, who serve when there is a fifth Friday in a month. Behind the scenes are eight trained and qualified staffers, who place food orders, stock shelves and a number of other jobs to get the Pantry ready to open on Friday. **You** are included in this ministry by your encouragement and support.

In October, we participated in the collection of coats and jackets for the Knoxville Area Rescue Mission's "Coats for the Cold" campaign. Our church secretary (Victoria) arranged for us to receive vouchers to give to those of our Friday clients, who needed coats or

jackets. Thanks to the generosity of our members, we also collected about 100 coats and jackets that were sent to KARM for this event making the cold a little more bearable.

Families and People Served in 2016 and 2015

Month	Families Served in 2016	Individuals Served in 2016	Families Served in 2015	Individuals Served in 2015
January	163	396	217	494
February	165	411	137	340
March	155	406	212	542
April	209	541	238	636
May	189	446	240	553
June	189	464	251	622
July	233	540	217	543
August	192	483	207	651
September	220	514	207	513
October	218	551	257	696
November	216	544	185	514
December	211	521	296	540
Total	2358	5817	2726	6862
Average/month	197	485	227	572

Holiday Food Baskets were distributed Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter to families nominated by Ridgeview, the Oak Ridge Housing Authority and the Family Resource Center Of the Oak Ridge City School System, at a total cost of \$5428 holidays. A “basket” represented about six boxes of food at a cost of \$50 per family. This year, the holiday Basket fund received contributions totaling \$595, as well as Hank’s Market “buy a bag of food for the hungry” project. We give thanks for those of you who came to prepare boxes, fill them with food and load them into the family’s vehicles. Sharon Knepp and Katherine Smith conducted the outreach to the families, the food pantry staff purchased the food and Janie Hiserote and Phil Stumbo orchestrated the set-up and packing of boxes. We give thanks for these folks who made the holidays a little more joyful for the families.



Speaking of joyful, we had a couple of “boxers” who entertained us while we worked. ANGEL TREE There were 122 angels on the tree, representing 61 children who needed to be remembered at Christmas. There were 2 Angels for each child, one for clothes and one for a toy, book, game, etc. Ingrid applied for an Action Team grant from Thrivent to buy for

the Angels who were not taken off the tree. There were also 31 Stars for men and women living in Senior Residences and an Army veteran. Judy applied for an Action Team grant from Thrivent to buy for the Stars who were not taken off the tree. Everyone received presents and all had a Merry Christmas!