

REPORT ON ST. JOHN'S PEACEMEAL PROJECT 2022

In 2006 St. John's began a free fellowship meal for all, but it was formally established in 2009 and it has continued every Saturday since then (with one exception). It was served cafeteria style in the Parish Hall until the COVID epidemic changed the serving to bagged dinners handed out personally from the Parish Hall door. We call this meal program the Peace Meal Project because we know that a meal is only a small piece of the puzzle when it comes to addressing poverty, inequality, and loneliness. This ministry is focused exclusively on serving a meal; we do not collect or distribute clothes, food items, or transportation tickets. But we believe that sharing a fellowship meal together brings us closer to the reign of God that we hope for: a community of justice, peace, and dignity for all people.

Ten churches and a few once-a-year groups have provided the volunteer service on a rotating basis, so no group burns out. The volunteers are a blessing to our guests and no doubt the experience of service is a blessing to the volunteers. St. John's coordinators serve on a rotating basis, each planning, gathering the needed food, and supervising the cooking and serving.

Annually the total number of meals served is about 2800, with 55 being the weekly average. The major accomplishment is, thanks BE to God, that this work

continues and that it continues to bless all involved. The financial support that allows the purchase of the food and supplies needed comes mostly from the Diocesan Task Force for the Hungry, but several churches make substantial faithful donations as do individuals. Now the challenge is to decide when or how we should return to serving inside the Parish Hall. The dilemma: winter is coming; the volunteers would like to be able to interact personally with the guests once again, but we need the volunteers and guests to feel safe.

Contact Phyllis Jacobson at phyllisajacobson@att.net to learn more about helping with the Peace Meal.

Report submitted by the Rev. Nancy Emmel Gunn