

# Statement of Operations

## First Presbyterian Church of Metuchen Food Pantry Program

The FPC food pantry has been in existence for over fifty years. It wasn't until the 2017, when Sarah Teti, our now Director for Local assistance, transformed the food pantry program from one of limited means into what is now among of the strongest in the state of New Jersey. Ms. Teti has been a visionary and fierce advocate for the FPC's food pantry program forming strong bonds within Metuchen's and Edison's civic, religious, and business organizations. She and her team of volunteers have served to make it a place of deep respect for, and thoughtful outreach to, those in need – our customers.

### The mission of the food pantry is to:

1. Provide healthy food in a dignified way to those in need in the Metuchen/Edison area without regard to race, color, religion, age, handicap, sex, or national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression
2. Strengthen the community while providing individuals and groups with the ability to serve others through volunteering time and/or giving food or monetary donations
3. Educate clients, those we serve, and the public at large, of additional programs and issues of hunger in the area
4. The Food Pantry operates as a component of a comprehensive path for dependent or needy families and individuals as they become more financially stable or move toward complete independence.

### Operations

The FPC food pantry is staffed by approximately 20 volunteers including church and non-church members. Sarah has worked with volunteers to form relationships with many civic organizations that help staff and provide food and sanitary products for our customers. This includes the Metuchen, Elks, various Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops, the Metuchen school district, and the YMCA "**Togetherhood**" program.

Such a robust program could not be possible without partnership with Temple Emanu-El, the Metuchen Edison Interfaith Clergy Association, the Metuchen Edison Assistance League (also known as M.E.A.L.), and REPLENISH, the Middlesex county food bank. It is also noteworthy to point out that the FPC is supported by many merchants in Metuchen and Edison. Met

FPC's food pantry program serves approximately 110 families through our client choice program. Each month our volunteers make about 50 individual home deliveries in Metuchen and Edison alone. In partnership with **Women Aware**, Sarah and her team deliver food to survivors of domestic violence, who are currently displaced from their homes; about twenty women a month.

Food drop-off is currently takes place Monday through Friday from 8:30 to 4:30. The food pantry is open from 9 AM till 11 AM Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings with the Client Choice program occurring on Wednesday and Thursday mornings. Those in need can also make special arrangements for food pickups if they are unable to come to the food pantry during normal operating hours.

Currently, in addition to food, we are offering food stamp education, an upcoming budget class, and the opportunity to meet with a homeless outreach social worker if our clients are in danger of eviction or are currently homeless.

### **Food Pantry Expansion Goals**

The goal of the requested FPC food pantry program is to provide servers in building with the space to have a legitimate store that our clients can come into and shop for their food for free. This expansion will also serve to give the Food Pantry program the autonomy to serve our customers without infringing on church space that is desperately needed for other church missions. The expansion will provide many benefits:

- Will provide more space to store foods in an improved organized manner
- Provide store-like accommodations that will provide customers with a comforting and respectful space to shop for their food and sanitary needs
- Create a large enough space to streamline the flow of our customers
- Allow the Food Pantry to stay open when it might otherwise be closed due to church programming requiring complete use of its existing space
- Provide space for volunteers to help customers, particularly the elderly and handicapped, who need special assistance.
- To provide volunteers with additional opportunities and time slots to volunteer

### **Traffic and Parking Impact**

It is important to note that the expansion of the food pantry is not intended to serve more customers nor do we anticipate taking on more food deliveries. Consequently, we do not see any additional customer or delivery traffic and as such the abundance of parking spaces in the Social Center parking lot will continue to be far in excess of the need.

## **First Presbyterian Church of Metuchen**

### **History**

The First Presbyterian Church of Metuchen was founded in 1717 by Parishioners of the Woodbridge Church who had moved into this area of the township. The original meetinghouse, located in the Old Colonial Cemetery, served as a useful gathering place for the farmers and merchants. For almost 150 years it was the only church in Metuchen. In the 1770's, the Rev. Azel Roe, the Woodbridge pastor who preached part-time in Metuchen, was a strong supporter of the independence movement, as were many Presbyterian clergy in New Jersey.

When the railroad first came through Metuchen in the 1830's, a new and enlarged church building was erected as its present location. The church remained small during the 19th and early 20th century, with its clergy and lay officers remaining in office for extended periods of time. In the 100 years between

1877 and 1977, the church had only three pastors: James Mason, George Humphries and Adolph Behrenberg.

Since World War II, the church has grown from a small rural congregation into a larger church serving the growing suburban population in many distinctive ways. These include activities and clubs that are open to not only church members but non-members as well. Specifically, our food pantry, music program, 30 Hour Famine (hunger awareness), Habitat for Humanity mission trip, Community Nursery school, Rummage sale, Social Justice, Soup ministry, Helping Hands, and Elder Care.

### **First Presbyterian Church Mission Statement**

It is our mission to be a welcoming and diverse congregation that serves God by improving the spiritual mental and physical well-being of people in our community and beyond through worship, education, fellowship, music, and mission outreach

### **Staff**

- Fred Garry – Senior Pastor \*
- Ashley Bair – Interim Associate Pastor \*
- Nancy Leardi – Director, Christian Education \*
- Jordan Klotz – Director, Music Ministries \*
- Sarah Teti – Director, Local Mission
- Sue Harmon – Director, Operations and Finance \*
- Heather Koball, Executive Director of Missions
- Melissa Luis – Director, Community Church Nursery School \*
- Merry Matlock – senior Services Coordinator
- Colleen Walker – Administrative Assistant \*
- Vicky Lacson – Administrative and Communications Coordinator
- Elaine Hansen – Assistant Bell Director
- Jonathan Hollenbeck – Facilities manager \*
- Bob O’Connell – Facilities Assistant
- Nate Brown – Technical and Sound Design Consultant
- Kat Davis – Drama Consultant

### **Community Programs and Outreach (Open to Church and Non-Church Members)**

- Community Nursery School
- Community Dinners
- Blood Drives
- Sponsorship of Girl and Boy Scout troops
- Existing Food Pantry
- Habitat for Humanity program
- 30 Hour Famine Social Justice Meetings and Discussion Groups

- Addiction Programs
  - Alcoholics Anonymous
  - Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
  - Multiple Sclerosis
  - Narcotics Anonymous
- Community Baseball Field
- Community Garden

### **Free Meeting Space for Community and Ecumenical Support**

- Temple Emmanuel – Support during their construction process
- Metuchen High School Senior Awards Dinner (Free)
- Weddings/Receptions

### **Children's Ministry**

- Youth Club – 5<sup>th</sup> grade through Senior High School
- Sunday School
- Vacation Bible School – For Members and Non-members
- Johnsonburg Camp and Retreat Center

### **Music Program**

- Vocal choirs
  - Jubilee Choir – Age 4 through Second grade
  - Junior Choir – Grades 3 – 6
  - Westminster Choir – Grades 7 – 12
  - Adults – Senior Choir
- Handbell Choirs
  - Joy ringers – Grades 3 – 6
  - Good News Ringers – Grades 9 – 12
  - Concord Ringers – Adults
  - Covenant Ringers – Adults

### **Adult Enrichment**

- Workshops
- Book studies
- Seasonal studies
- Bible studies
- Fellowship events
- Second-hour forums

## **Indonesian Fellowship**

Welcoming Indonesian immigrants into our community and helping them assimilate. We do this through the sharing of our sanctuary and facilities, assisting in fellowship programs, and choirs.

## **Deacons**

- Providing Home, Assisted Living, and Hospital visits
- Elder Care – nurturing and supporting members of our congregation who are shut-ins and unable to gather due to illness.
- Elder Visitation
- Flower Deliveries
- Advocating for giving and nurturing through its Soup Program
- Advent Angels –
  - Holiday gifts for Residents of Roosevelt Hospital
  - Holiday gifts for under-served children in Elizabethport
  - Food pantry support
  - Helping Hands – aiding in home maintenance and medical transportation

## **Presbyterian Women**

- Supporting the missions of the church both locally and worldwide
- Hospital and assisted Sunday services

## **Closing**

We would like to thank each member of the Metuchen Planning Board for considering this request for an expansion of First Presbyterian's food pantry. We believe that this expansion will enable our volunteers to more capably serve our neighborhoods in Metuchen and Edison, but without causing undue stress on auto or pedestrian thoroughfares. Sarah Teti and her team of volunteers have, with great resolve, demonstrated that great strength and goodness can be found in building relationships with businesses, with town and county organizations, and with religious institutions in our corner of the world. Through that strength, we can quite literally make a significant, and oft-times, life-saving difference in the lives of our neighbors by providing the compassionate support and assistance they desperately need.