



STONEGATE MINISTRY

Stonegate Community Ecumenical Ministry

Annual Report

for the fiscal year
ending December 31st, 2023



2023

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Stonegate Ministry

Vision

Working together to build a stronger, kinder and more just community

Mission

Stonegate Ministry is an alliance of local Christian churches working in partnership with the community through shared resources, offering programs and opportunities to build healthy relationships, strong families, a sense of belonging and a deeper relationship with God. We endeavour to address the needs of the whole person and families to bridge toward a better life and to be a faithful voice to ensure that everyone in the community is treated with justice and Christian compassion.

Core Values

Stonegate Ministry is committed to:

- **The wellbeing of the individual:** We will endeavor at all times to treat each person with kindness and respect while giving special attention to those who find themselves marginalized. To the best of our ability we will provide aid to ensure the basics to those in need: safety, food, shelter, support (economic, social, spiritual and emotional), while engaging in skill-building in order to develop people.
- **Building healthy community:** We will actively work to reduce isolation and loneliness and to provide opportunities to build healthy relationships.
- **Christian witness:** we will endeavor at all times to be a visible and articulate Christian witness to those around us.
- **Stewardship:** We are committed to effective use of our resources at every level of the organization while striving for excellence. We consider the resources we are given to be God's gifts of time, money and talent.

Report of the Chair

Although the pandemic is firmly in our rearview mirror, it does seem as if much of its imprint on the world will continue indefinitely, and one wonders whether the word ‘normalcy’ will have usage for some time into the future!

The year 2023 has certainly not been normal in almost any sense for Stonegate Ministry and our clients – an obvious example of this would be the fact that our Food bank is now serving ‘one family per minute’ during the periods of time that it is open to provide food for our clients.

That situation stems largely from factors from the pandemic period such as high interest rates, the increasing cost of food, the difficulty in finding affordable accommodation, the return to the need to pay for commuting to and from worksites for many, and the difficulty in finding jobs where the pay rate covers such expenses.

As we entered the year, our Food Bank Manager, Jeannie, was still dealing with heart and kidney issues, and our Ministry Program Director, Natalie, was coping with the onset of multiple sclerosis, but through facilitators like Bruce Smith, Sue Hill, Kathleen Mahaffey, Sue Iaboni, and others, we were still able to continue programs that throughout the pandemic, and now in the aftermath, countered isolation and loneliness, allowing people, many of whom are elderly, to begin again to meet in person. They were offered companionship, support, and hope for the future through these regular community gatherings.

Because of the support received for our Video Presentation in May, the proceeds from those who purchased tickets and from other donations enabled us to continue our support for the most vulnerable individuals and families in our community.

Throughout the summer, fortunately Natalie’s health remained stable, her pregnancy somewhat offsetting the MS effects, and as Jeannie’s situation improved, we were then in a better position to run these programs. The Ministry did lose Natalie’s energy and leadership in the Fall as she was off on maternity leave, caring for her lovely baby girl.

We then entered December facing the largest financial deficit that the Ministry has ever experienced, and knowing that our community was facing even more daunting needs than ever before, such as:

- An ever-increasing demand for food security
- The lack of companionship and mental support for the lonely
- Assistance for new immigrant families housed in local motels
- Winter apparel (coats, jackets, boots, school supplies) for families
- Christmas gifts of toys for vulnerable children and families
- Food vouchers for a Christmas meal for Food Bank clients

Only through God's blessing in the form of generosity from our community of supporters could the Ministry have emerged into a New Year, looking back on a critical month of having met to a large degree, all these needs, and yet being in unimpaired financial shape ourselves!

Other community organizations such as Kiwanis and Greey-Lennox Foundation rallied to the cause, and our community of individual donors not only gave generously themselves, but also encouraged their friends to help out too! Many gifts were received in honour and memory of loved ones who had always cared for their neighbourhood, and our member churches (All Saints Anglican, Kingsway Baptist, Kingsway-Lambton United, Royal York United, Mimico Baptist, Mimico Presbyterian, Christ Church St. James Anglican) rose up to meet the need.

Without these acts of faithful generosity from our community, given the loss of revenue from our thrift store for the entire year, we would not have been able to enter a new year where even more clients face fiscal uncertainty, and yet be certain of our ability to continue our service to these most vulnerable individuals and families.

As we go forward into yet another year of service, we pray for guidance in finding and selecting a site for Great Finds. We thank God for His blessings on His Ministry over the past twelve months and pray for His direction and guidance in 2024.

Thankfully,
Peter Patterson, Chair

Treasurer's Report

In the early months of 2023, it seemed that the Ministry was heading for a huge financial loss; larger than the \$17,000 loss we had in 2022. But thanks to the largesse of our donors, the Ministry ended the year with a small loss of \$4,265.

Income from individual donors increased by \$15,000 over the previous year even as our support from local and national churches dropped by \$9,000. Also helping the cause were reduced staff costs of \$10,000 since our Ministry Program Director went on maternity leave in late 2023.

Without a store, donor support is key to the Ministry's well-being. God willing, there will be a new store in 2024 AND continued donor support so that the Ministry can expand its program offerings.

The cash position remains excellent, with \$104,000 in the chequing account and \$25,000 in a GIC.

Thanks to everyone for their spiritual and financial support in 2023.

Submitted by Pete Pynenburg, Treasurer

Human Resources Report

Jeannie Martinez has continued her invaluable role as full time Co-Manager of the Christ Church St. James Food Pantry, with which Stonegate Ministry has partnered for many years. Her presence at the food bank allows the Ministry to create a sense of continuity and connection among the clients who are served by both organizations. We are thankful for the resilience, expertise and compassion she has shown in carrying out her responsibilities.

Natalie Sharpe welcomed baby Joyanna in September 2023. We look forward to her return from maternity leave later in 2024.

As in previous years, we were able to take advantage of Services Canada's *Canada Summer Help* placement program that allows students to gain two months' work experience assisting the Ministry in the food bank operation and other areas.

Submitted by Moira Grant, Human Resources Chair

Ministry Program Report

We had eight programs in full operation in 2022, and despite several key staff members and committee members experiencing unfortunate health challenges that placed a pause in some activities, almost all of these programs were offered throughout 2023.

With our doors opening up after the pandemic, the demands for the programs increased significantly. Programs like the CCSJ Food Pantry experienced a tremendous demand increase because of many life circumstances changing for many people and families. Overall, we have found that the necessity for our programs and the need for more resources have increased because of the lasting effects of the pandemic on our local community. We have reached out to our community to help meet the demands of our programs and they have heard our cry and have come together to ensure the continuation of our efforts.

Program Updates

- *Circle of Friends* has continued our in-person meetings, under the leadership of Susan Hill and Kathleen Mahaffy. We are providing a light lunch for the ladies. We are delighted that attendance has been maintained with a weekly average of 15+ ladies in attendance. The ladies enjoy participating in a variety of activities like quizzes, body stretches, vacation slideshow tours and the various topics explored with our guest speakers.
- *God, Coffee, and Me?* has continued to gather at Nimman's Thai restaurant weekly for their Bible study with Bruce. This program continues to be a staple by lending the opportunity to share the gospel through a relaxed and approachable setting in a local restaurant.
- *Get Reading!* is a weekly book program at the food bank designed to encourage

a love for reading with children and youth. As the number of clients attending the food bank has increased so has the demand for the books for kids. Interestingly, some parents, new to Canada, have also used the same books to aid themselves in their efforts to learn English. The program has seen a tremendous reception of gratitude from those who participate and has also encouraged other local organizations to participate in donating books via school book drives, etc. We have been able to create more opportunities for interaction with those who are receiving books regularly. We are excited about planning and executing a backpack drive for the upcoming school year in which 50 filled backpacks will be donated to children in need in our community.

- *The Prayer Course* is an online program that has been offered weekly online via Zoom. It is a journey through the Lord's Prayer. Conversation, testimony and teaching help the community to grow and deepen their prayer life, one session at a time. We have successfully completed several rounds of this course with a bonus Part 2 round, "The Prayer Course II 'Unanswered Prayers'". There has been positive feedback and requests for further rounds of The Prayer Course which we're hoping to offer at a later time in the day for those who work during the days.
- *Life Coach Counselling* is one of our answers to the growing need for mental health support in our community. This program is a person-to-person weekly or as-needed counselling session. It is helping people to navigate through the rough patches in their life. It offers them access to a listening ear and helpful guidance to realign their daily path and get them back on course to a healthier journey in their life. Partnerships with independent mental health facilitators are currently being developed.
- *The Amplified Program* aims to empower young women to acknowledge their ability to amplify their voice and share their stories through the powerful medium of media. This program is in partnership with the Jean Augustine Centre for Empowering Young Women. It generally has participants of 12 to 15 years of age. The girls learned about the history of media and how to develop a character and a story. They have also explored new tips and advice on how to create a quality photograph using their mobile phones. Girls who completed the course were awarded simple mobile recording gear to continue their individual efforts to tell their original story.
- Prayer and a listening ear are necessary components for clients attending our Food Bank, since so many of these are dealing with grief in various forms – loss of family in the pandemic or for some, left behind in other countries, loss of

accommodation, loss of jobs, etc. Near the end of 2023, when Natalie, our Program Director was no longer available, we began a search for an experienced individual who would be willing to act as a Chaplain for this community and to be an intercessor for many in need.

Submitted by Peter Patterson, Chair

Christ Church St. James Food Pantry Partnership

Overview

Stonegate Ministry partners with Christ Church St. James Food Pantry which is one of three agencies operating under the auspices of the Daily Bread Food Bank serving southern Etobicoke and is part of the South Etobicoke Food Network. CCSJ Food Pantry is open three times a month. Depending on the family size, we provide approximately 3-5 days' worth of food each food bank day. The greater the donations of food and money we receive, the more generous we can be in order to increase our food allocations.

CCSJ Food Pantry Hours of Operation

- The second Saturday of the month: 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (recently extended by 30 minutes)
- The last two Wednesdays of the month: 1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Toy Mountain

Every year, CCSJ Food Pantry provides a Toy Mountain on the second Saturday food bank in December. This year, food bank clients with children ages 14 and under were able to choose one large and one small toy, game, puzzle, or activity set for their children for Christmas. We were blessed with donations from our regular donors, partner churches such as Kingsway Baptist Church and again from Alderwood United Church. We were able to provide toys for 173 children, totaling nearly 350 toys given. This number does not include any organizations we partnered with such as Stonegate Community Health Centre and other churches (i.e., through Bruce) that needed toys for their clients. THANK YOU to all the donors!

Good Food Box

Through our partnership with Stonegate Community Health Centre, 193 of our food bank families received a Good Food Box before Christmas. This box, filled with \$25 worth of fresh fruits and vegetables, was available for food bank clients who signed up to receive it. We had a record high number of families who participated. Any boxes that were not picked up were added to the following food bank's produce selection.

Stonegate Ministry Christmas Cards

On the food bank Wednesday before Christmas, we were able to provide to our food bank clients, the Stonegate Ministry Christmas card that included grocery gift cards inside: \$30 for families of one to two people and \$60 for families of three and up. This year, the Ministry handed out \$11,400 worth of PC grocery gift cards. Many expressed their gratitude and thanks for this extra gift just in time for Christmas. THANK YOU, STONEGATE MINISTRY!

Chickens – Turkeys – Roasts

On the food bank Wednesday before Christmas, we also provided our food bank clients with turkeys, chickens, and roasts with choices of stuffing, gravies and cranberry sauce. Many were appreciative and grateful to receive such blessings. We distributed 82 turkeys, 142 chickens and 20 roasts in addition to families' regular food supplies that day.

Ukrainian Social Services Toronto (Translators)

Through our partnership with Stonegate Community Health Centre (SCHC), rotations of four Ukrainian translators volunteered at every Wednesday food bank. The translators helped during registration processes for new clients as well as translating any questions Ukrainian clients may have. The translators at times would bring any Ukrainian material and program information that is offered by the USST and would also help out any other areas at the food bank whenever required. As part of this partnership, CCSJ Food Pantry is required to provide SCHC a monthly report of the number of families served.

Park Lawn Junior Middle School

Since November 2023, a class of Grade 3 students has taken a more active role in helping their community. Guided by their teacher, who raised awareness of food insecurity in their neighbourhood, they chose to support CCSJ Food Pantry and

committed to having a food drive every month. In November, they came into CCSJ and helped sort and pack donations as a group. (Due to an outbreak of Covid among many food bank volunteers, we had to restrict their group entry during the winter season.) As a class, they walked to CCSJ with their donations on the Monday before the last Wednesday food bank of 2023 and took turns sending their donations down the receiving ramp of the food bank chute.

Refugee Families from the Queensway Motel

Due to the influx of refugees entering Toronto, the government was directing a number of families to the Queensway Motel. Word of mouth sent the families directly to CCSJ for food and clothing. We provided emergency food supplies and ready-made meals from food bank donations to the families whenever required. The Refugee Committee was able to use much of the clothing from the Great Finds Thrift Store inventory to clothe many of the refugee families.

Holiday Food Bank

During the Christmas and New Year holidays in 2023, many food banks in the city were closed. CCSJ Food Pantry was the only food bank open in Etobicoke that was accepting new clients or clients without appointments. Due to the lack of volunteers and not knowing how many additional numbers of unregistered clients we were going to show up to the food bank, CCSJ Food Pantry chose to return to the Covid model of service. Clients attending that day were not able to shop indoors for their food. Instead, food supplies were pre-packed and clients had choice only in their bread, meat, dairy and special needs. After registration, clients proceeded to the back of the church to receive their food supplies.

COBS Bread

Our partnership with COBS Bread has grown. In addition to our regular pickup from COBS Leaside on the evening prior to food bank, we have had regular pickups from COBS Humbertown (every other Sunday evening and every Monday evening) and COBS Sobey's Plaza on the evening prior to food bank.

Walk-In Fridge and Freezer

With most of the funding coming through a special grant received from the Food Access Committee through Stonegate Community Health Centre, CCSJ Food

Pantry was able to install a walk-in fridge and freezer in the food bank back pantry rooms. Having these two walk-ins enabled us to receive more supplies from Daily Bread and Second Harvest and we now have more room to store additional donations and purchases from other sources.

COVID-19 and the Rise of Inflation

Prior to COVID-19, CCSJ Food Pantry supported an average of 60 to 70 families three times a month with an annual budget of \$19,000. As of the end of 2023, an average of 270 families registered for food bank services at CCSJ Food Pantry three times a month. We saw not only new families needing the food bank but also working families, due to the rising costs of food, gas and supplies. In addition, as a result of the war in Ukraine, we also saw many Ukrainian refugees needing the services of our food bank, many of whom have young children in their family. We have also seen an influx of refugee families from Africa.

Due to this greater demand, CCSJ Food Pantry's budget increased to over \$135,000 in 2023. The increase in families attending our food bank has caused shortages in our food supplies and has put a burden and stress on our food bank. We also continue to experience donation shortfalls from our regular donors such as Toronto Daily Bread, Second Harvest and various corporations and organizations. As a result, we have been forced to buy additional supplies on a regular basis and to extend our hours of operations in order to meet the increased needs.

New Team Member

This year we welcomed Christopher Petrie to our food bank leadership team. Christopher joins Gord Glandfield, Sue Maurici and Jeannie Martinez as Expediter of CCSJ Food Pantry. Christopher is responsible for supply sourcing and pickups along with other duties. Welcome Christopher!

Thank You Notes

Donations of food and cash enable our food bank to accommodate shortfalls. We give thanks to all our generous donors for their continuous support of CCSJ Food Pantry, including the residents of Old Mill Terrace who collectively donated over \$10,000 again this past year through volunteer David Edwards. There are so many we want to thank, including:

- Stonegate Community Health Centre
- Ukrainian Social Services
- Knights of Columbus
- St. Demetrius
- Kiwanis
- The Rotary Club
- ... and all our partner churches.

We give special thanks to all the volunteers. June 2023 saw the return of the CCSJ Food Pantry Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. On this evening, volunteers were honoured guests at a catered dinner at CCSJ. Special honour was given to Loretta Carnahan and a retirement gift for Reverend David Smith for their years of service at CCSJ Food Pantry. All volunteers received gifts, with some volunteers receiving special awards. Their dedication and hard work are to be commended.

Submitted by Jeannie Martinez, CCSJ Food Pantry Co-Director

Prayer for You Report

Due to several factors, including declining membership and the loss of a place to meet, the *Prayer for You* Group is temporarily on hold. E-mailed and phoned prayer requests that come through Stonegate Ministry are sent to the CCSJ prayer chain. Stonegate Ministry is actively seeking volunteers and we look forward to the day when the Lord will rebuild the *Prayer for You* group.

Submitted by Carol-Anne Foty, Coordinator, Prayer for You

Facilities Report

Our search for a new location for our Great Finds store is constantly on our agenda and is a top priority. Our real estate agent, Doug Moore, decided to spend more time at his cottage and is now retired. All our board members spent time looking at any properties that may be suitable. We continue to store 95% of our Great Finds clothing in a storage unit on Kipling Ave and the remaining items are at Christ Church St. James.

One of our community partners in the neighbourhood advised us that their building might be available to purchase. At first, this seemed very farfetched as we tried to figure out how we would even come up with a down payment, let alone carry the costs each month. The only reason we pursued it is because the owners of the building agreed to sell it for a price considerably lower than the market value. They were very impressed with the scope of the work we did in the community. They have supported the food bank both financially and by providing volunteers.

We then approached the diocese of one of our member churches to ask them to consider giving us a loan at a reasonable rate of return. It went through several committees and they agreed to do so with two requirements. The first is that the building be approved for use under the current city by-laws and, second, that the property not be designated a heritage site. We are working on those two requirements now. The owners of the building have been very patient and realize that working with the City of Toronto takes time. Hopefully we will have an answer by the end of the year 2024. There are many more steps to be taken before we can get an occupancy permit.

Meanwhile, the clothing that was stored at Christ Church St. James came in handy as we were able to provide much needed items to all the refugee families who were housed in our neighbourhood. None had any warm clothing whatsoever. We were also able to sell some clothing at the Summer Sizzler held in May 2023. Even though we do not have a permanent home yet, we continue to serve the community.

Submitted by Gordon Glandfield, Facilities Chair

Publicity Report

Our support base has been very faithful in their support but has not grown substantially in 2023. Our goal is to increase that number by providing more interesting and better communications.

The Ministry quarterly newsletter took on a fresh new look in 2023. The last two issues introduced our new logo and colours which are now used in all Ministry communications. Our goal of bringing more stories of the people we serve through the food bank and community programs was launched to communicate more effectively how the support of our churches and individuals is making a difference in their lives. Much effort has gone into the redesign of our website using the new logo and colours. The more contemporary look will also provide easier access to the news and updates in the Ministry. The final adjustments will be made for a launch in the fall of 2024. We are indebted to Don and Raymond Gill for their ongoing technical expertise and recommendations for improvement.

Also planned for 2024 is a video showing the workings of the food bank and the reliance on our volunteers, church food drives and individual donations - both financial and food. This initial effort will provide our supporters insight on how the food bank works and will be the first of a series of videos on other areas of the Ministry for use in our member churches and prospective donors.

Submitted on behalf of the Publicity Committee: Moira Grant, Jeannie Martinez and Natalie Sharpe
Graeme Quigley, Publicity Chair

2023 Stonegate Ministry Board of Directors

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All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church

Stonegate Ministry
Balance Sheet – Consolidated – 2023

ASSETS

Bank accounts	\$ 103,850
Investments	\$ 25,000
Other assets	\$ 4,102

TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 132,952
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LIABILITIES

Food vouchers	\$ 1,204
Other current liabilities	\$ 21,623

Sub-total current liabilities	\$ 22,827
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EQUITY

Reserve – Development Fund	\$ 40,000
Retained earnings	\$ 80,828
Net Assets	-\$ 10,703

TOTAL EQUITY	\$ 110,125
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TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$ 132,952
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Stonegate Ministry
2023 Income and Expense Summary

INCOME

Support from local churches	\$ 76,378
Individual donations	\$ 59,399
Great Finds store sales	\$ 193
Interest	\$ 1,748
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 137,718

EXPENSES

MINISTRY EXPENSES

Great Finds	\$ 12,833
Ministry staff	\$ 108,843
Program expense	\$ 12,128
Total Ministry Expenses	\$ 133,804

ADMINISTRATION

Administration	\$ 8,179
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TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 141,983
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EXCESS (Deficiency) REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	(\$4,265)
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