

CHURCH AND SOCIETY COMMITTEE
GETHSEMANE FOOD PROGRAM SUBCOMMITTEE
Annual Report 2009

In mid-2009, the Youth Service and Fellowship (YSF) group joined forces with the Church and Society Committee to increase food donations for the Gethsemane Food Program. The goal was to raise awareness of the food pantry with families and the overall congregation and to significantly increase the volume of donations. The YSF group created beautiful food collection boxes which are in the narthex before church every Sunday. Also, on most Sundays there is a basket on the table at the front of church as a symbol of food as an offering to God, of the “hands on” mission in our New York City community, and of the chronic nature of hunger and the on-going need for food donations.

A second goal was to understand the types of food that are needed and where the food goes. To do that, the group needed to learn about the Church of Gethsemane, located in Park Slope, Brooklyn. The Church had its beginnings, 20 or so years ago, at First Church, when they met as a fellowship in our chapel. From their mission: “Founded in 1986 as a fellowship and established as a church in 1989, The Church of Gethsemane is a congregation of The Presbyterian Church (USA) created by and for incarcerated persons, formerly incarcerated persons, their families, neighborhood persons, and people who feel called into ministry with the poor. In solidarity, we seek justice for our world and the empowerment of the Christian gospel in our lives. We thrive on our diversity and value our inclusiveness. No one is turned away. All are welcome. We strive to create a spiritual community that comforts and challenges, struggles and sustains, heals and liberates. We value people for who they are, which frees us to struggle for who we—and the world—might become.” (www.thechurchofgethsemane.org)

The food pantry serves the needs of the Church’s congregation, including the 100 plus Project Connect members, currently incarcerated in NYS prisons, to whom food packages are sent. Food with protein is most needed – specifically tuna, mackerel, salmon and sardines, chili, stews, soups, as well as beans, vegetables, fruit, tomato sauce, peanut butter, mac and cheese, rice (in boxes, not bags) oatmeal and other cereal and pasta -- nothing in glass.

The C&S / YSF are happy to report that since joining forces, donations have increased; the types of food donated are what is needed in the pantry; and, through the generosity of Anne Gaines and her son Web Wines, food is delivered to the church twice a month.

In 2010, we will continue to build awareness among our congregation with the goal that everybody brings a can of food every Sunday.

Submitted by: Anne Gray, Gethsemane Food Program Subcommittee

Youth Fellowship and Service – Anne Gaines and Anne Gray – co-leaders