



Community Engagement Ministry Annual Report 2020

Seeking God, Creating Community, Practicing Justice

2020 was a year of unexpected challenges—COVID-19, virtual worship, virtual school, social isolation, lost income. So many new stressors and yet so many familiar challenges including hunger, racial injustice, health issues, and natural disasters. Saint Andrew stepped up to these issues through our Community Engagement Ministry (CEM, previously called Mission). As part of the Saint Andrew community, you are helping to make good things happen locally, nationally and globally.

We hope this annual report helps you understand the projects Saint Andrew supports. During 2020, Saint Andrew partnered with more than a dozen organizations, providing financial and volunteer support.

Thank you to everyone who supports Saint Andrew CEM efforts. We always have room on the CEM team for more volunteers. Watch the weekly email for opportunities to help in small and large ways. Join us as we build community and make a difference in the world.

Cathy Thomas, Chair

Saint Andrew Community Engagement Ministry

Center of Grace

Center of Grace, located in downtown Olathe, provides basic services to the vulnerable, and offers programs that promote self-sufficiency and stability. In 2020, Center of Grace served over 22,000 free meals, provided free health screenings, loaned medical equipment, and distributed clothing, new shoes, school supplies, and rent/utility assistance.



Saint Andrew supports Center of Grace by preparing the community meal once a month and with monthly financial donations. Volunteers also serve as tutors for the English as a Second Language (ESL) program.

Around the fall of 2016 I recall the mood in the country best described as "ugly." There was a very bitter election in progress. Divisions with friends and family reached the point that they could not even be rationally discussed. I was discouraged and feeling like nothing I was doing was really making any difference in the world. I thought of something I heard or read, probably at SACC ... "Be the change you want to see in the world." I don't think of myself as someone with any special talents in any particular area, but I am comfortable in the kitchen and the SACC team was in need of new leadership for its Center of Grace volunteer effort. It felt like the universe was speaking to me.

--Rich Baier, Saint Andrew's Center of Grace meal team leader

I have a long-standing interest in other cultures and a desire to welcome newcomers to our country. It occurred to me that one thing I can do to welcome immigrants is to tutor English as a Second Language (ESL). I discovered that Johnson County Community College teaches ESL classes at several locations, including Center of Grace. Until the pandemic caused closure of in person classes, I thoroughly enjoyed meeting and helping students from all over the world.

--Gloria Hiller, volunteer ESL tutor

Tall Oaks

Tall Oaks Camp and Conference Center is our region's gathering space for experiential learning and spiritual growth. While 2020 brought many challenges for the facility, staff and volunteers efforts positioned the camp for the future. During 2020, Tall Oaks:

- Was continuously operational on a very limited basis
- Transferred to United Camps, Conferences, and Retreats (UCCR) for operational management
- Completed over \$50,000 in major repairs, including reroofing the dining hall
- Completed a summer fundraising effort to support facility repairs and held a successful online gala to support the camp.



Moving into 2021, Tall Oaks is preparing to safely host camps for several groups this summer.

I love attending Tall Oaks Camp! The staff and counselors are very welcoming and the activities we do are fun for everyone.

—Ava Waller



The amazing counselors. The friends I've made over the years. Tall Oaks is always one of the highlights of my summer.

—Jackson Tabel

Directory of Community Engagement Projects—2020

Angels Outreach

Saint Andrew third through fifth graders (Angels) held a bake sale in early February with donations going to the Center of Grace.



Blood Drive

Saint Andrew hosted three blood drives in 2020, collecting 38 donations of whole blood and 1 donation of double red cells for the community blood bank. When COVID-19 restrictions cancelled blood drives, church members were encouraged to go to the Community Blood Center to donate blood.



Center of Grace

Saint Andrew volunteers prepared and served a free community dinner at Center of Grace in downtown Olathe once a month. An average of 275 people were served in-person during January, February and March. Meals were cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions in April and May. An average of 125 people received pick-up meals from June through December.

Disciple Mission Fund

This fund supports wider Disciples of Christ church ministries in our neighborhoods, regions, seminaries and universities, and mission outposts in more than 66 countries around the globe.



El Higueral

Saint Andrew continued a relationship with our sister community in El Higueral, San Salvador. Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, there were no visits to El Higueral during 2020. Special offerings supported a number of projects and Saint Andrew volunteers worked with El Higueral community members to create a virtual Twinning Celebration and a wildlife photo contest.



Grandparents Against Gun Violence (GAGV)

Saint Andrew volunteers created five panels for a Virtual Quilt Project promoting gun safety, passed out free gun locks at community events, and wrote to legislators to advocate for sensible gun regulation and safety measures. Saint Andrew was a sponsor for the annual GAGV community forum.



Hand of Welcome Refugee Ministry

Saint Andrew welcomed refugees to our community by providing financial support to Catholic Charities' resettlement process. We also held a hygiene product drive, continued support for our CSA family, coordinated fresh vegetable donations to a local food bank, donated homemade masks to Catholic Charities, and hosted three adult education presentations on refugee and immigrant issues.



Harvesters

In addition to the Saint Andrew annual volunteer day at Harvesters, we held a virtual food drive in response to the increased food bank needs during the pandemic.



House of Abraham

House of Abraham is a Habitat for Humanity program that promotes interfaith cooperation and understanding among Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities while building or renovating homes. During 2020, volunteering was restricted due to COVID-19 concerns.



Interfaith Outreach

Saint Andrew continued to support interfaith community building by participating in virtual interfaith events, including a Ramadan fast-breaking meal and the Dialogue Institute's Annual Peace and Friendship gathering.



Johnson County Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN)

We supported IHN as part of a network of congregations helping situationally homeless families. Saint Andrew hosted guest families for two weeks during 2020 (one week at a time), providing shelter for six adults and five children and accumulating over 460 volunteer hours.



Loaves and Fishes

Saint Andrew provides funds to support church members in need and provides grocery gift cards in response to outside requests for help.



Migrant Farmworkers Project

In solidarity with migrant farmworkers and their families, Saint Andrew collected donations for 85 backpacks with school supplies for children of farmworkers.



Racial Justice

Saint Andrew formed a Racial Justice Task Force in 2020 to help lead the church's anti-racism efforts. Actions included donating supplies to medics at protests in downtown Kansas City, MO, a fundraising drive to support Urban League of Greater Kansas City, and numerous learning opportunities through book clubs, adult education sessions, and action items in the church newsletter.



Tall Oaks

Saint Andrew supported Tall Oaks Camp and Conference Center as a place for spiritual growth and fellowship for youth and adults in the Greater Kansas City Christian Church, Disciples of Christ region.



Washington Elementary

Saint Andrew provided a meal for teachers on a parent/teacher conference day and collected gift cards for families in need.



Week of Compassion

A special offering at Saint Andrew on two Sundays supported the relief, refugee, and development mission fund for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). A second virtual offering in the fall supported COVID-19 relief efforts.



Financial Report - 2020

In 2020, Saint Andrew contributed \$57,400 to organizations addressing refugee, hunger, poverty, violence, homelessness, interfaith education, and emergency needs locally, nationally and globally. In addition to financial gifts, Saint Andrew collected in-kind donations for many organizations including IHN, Catholic Charities refugee resettlement and Washington Elementary. Saint Andrew volunteers also donated hundreds of hours of service.

Angel Outreach	\$ 100
Center of Grace	\$ 3,500
Disciple Mission Fund	\$ 10,300
El Higueral	\$ 9,400
GAGV	\$ 300
Hand of Welcome	\$ 4,100
Harvesters	\$ 4,200
Interfaith	\$ 750
IHN	\$ 2,400
Loaves and Fishes	\$ 1,800
Migrant Farmworkers	\$ 4,200
Pet Connection	\$ 50
Racial Justice	\$ 3,900
Tall Oaks	\$ 3,300
Washington Elementary	\$ 1,300
Week of Compassion	\$ 7,800
Total	\$ 57,400

Note: Some of the pictures used were from prior years due to the pandemic.