



## Serving Our Neighbors in Need

*“Let not the needy, O Lord be forgotten, nor the hope of the poor be taken away.”*

Christ Church resides in the heart of the city of Dayton. Time and again we as a parish have intentionally chosen to remain here for this is where God has called us to serve. Fifty years ago the Rev. Gordon Price, new Rector of Christ Church was quoted in a newspaper interview stressing the need for remaining a downtown church, “What we need is a new imaginative ministry. The old way would not touch the man on the street yet the suburbs would die if the heart of the city didn’t beat. Our parish must be not only for members of the congregation but for the person who passes by . . . Our doors are always open. Our ministry is always outreach.” So began the social awareness and outreach ministries of Christ Church.

Fifty years later, under the leadership of The Rev. John Paddock, Christ Church continues our ministry of presence in the downtown responding with what we call our CityHeart program. With thanks to the Vestry and people of Christ Church, our doors are still open for all passersby. Many of these folk don’t “pass by” but come in for a variety of reasons. Some come for meetings and events, some are curious and just want to look around, and others are simply looking for a quiet place to pray or rest. The simplest needs we meet are offering a drink of water or cup of coffee, use of the restrooms or the telephone. Some seek shelter from the cold and heat, snow and rain. Some are hungry, in which case we offer an “emergency sack lunch” from an inventory of non-perishable lunch/snack foods that we keep. We also refer these folks to food pantries and hot meal sites in the area.

Increasingly for many, the immediate needs are greater. We receive numerous calls and walk-ins for help with rents, deposits and utilities. This is when we work in partnership with others. Christ Church is a member of the United Way HelpLink Case Consultation which provides our staff with accessibility to their consultants and database of assisting agencies county-wide. For longer term assistance we make referral to our Benefit Bank volunteers who can help to assess and make application for those who may qualify for public assistance programs.

In cases of financial need, discretionary funds are prudently used, only after some form of verification has been made, paid by check only, never cash. The CityHeart program is partially funded by grants, and we keep an alphabetical database file of clients which allows us to track and report assistance given to those in need. We believe that the responsible use of these funds help us to: keep many people self-sufficient under stressed circumstances, keep many from the ranks of homelessness, and assist others to climb out of dire situations.

For those of you who visit the office during the week, you may have witnessed some of this activity. For those who do not or cannot, I wish to regularly offer a “glimpse” of this ministry. Look for “A CityHeart Moment” in future Broadcasts.