

OPEN HEARTS ♦ OPEN MINDS ♦ OPEN DOORS

# *St. Patrick-St. Anthony Church*

HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT



FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

MARCH 26, 2023



**St. Patrick-St. Anthony Church and  
The Franciscan Center for Urban Ministry**

285 Church Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06103  
tel 860-756-4034 • info@spsact.org • www.spsact.org



*Open Hearts  
Open Minds  
Open Doors*

We are a welcoming and dynamic community of Christian disciples. Rooted in the Franciscan experience of the Roman Catholic tradition, we proactively endeavor to extend hospitality both at the Eucharistic Table and as we minister reciprocally and in solidarity among the alienated and the poor, nurturing the mind, body, and spirit in the Greater Hartford Community. All are welcome!



**Celebration of the Eucharist**

Masks are optional at all Masses

**Saturday Evening Mass of Anticipation**

4:00 PM Public & Livestream

**Sunday Masses**

8:00 AM Public

10:00 AM Public & Livestream  
(Special "Mask Only" section available)

11:45 AM Public

5:00 PM Public

**Weekday Masses**

7:30 AM Public

12:05 PM Public & Livestream

**Sacrament of Reconciliation**

**Masks are required for everyone during Reconciliation**

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 11:15 to 11:45 AM

Saturday 3:15 to 3:45 PM



**Palm Sunday of the Passion, April 1 & 2**

Saturday Mass at 4:00 PM

Sunday Masses at 8:00 AM, 10:00 AM, 11:45 AM and 5:00 PM

**Holy Thursday, April 6**

Mass of the Lord's Supper, 7:00 PM

*Special Collection will be taken for the Franciscan Center*

Compline (Prayer Service), 9:00 PM

**Good Friday, April 7**

Liturgy of the Lord's Passion, 3:00 PM

*Special Collection will be taken for the Holy Land*

Musical Meditation, 7:00 PM

*The Crucifixion* by Sir John Stainer

sung by choirs of St. Patrick-St. Anthony Church  
under the direction of Dr. Gabriel Löfvall, Dir. of Music Ministry

**Holy Saturday, April 8**

Great Vigil of Easter, 8:00 PM

**Easter Sunday, April 9**

Masses at 8:00 AM, 10:00 AM, 11:45 AM and 5:00 PM

*Daily Mass Readings*

**Monday, Mar 27:** Dn 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62 or 13:41c-62; Jn 8:1-11  
**Tuesday, Mar 28:** Nm 21:4-9; Jn 8:21-30  
**Wednesday, Mar 29:** Dn 3:14-20, 91-92, 95; Jn 8:31-42  
**Thursday, Mar 30:** Gn 17:3-9; Jn 8:51-59  
**Friday, Mar 31:** Jer 20:10-13; Jn 10:31-42  
**Sunday, April 2:** Mt 21:1-11; Is 50:4-7; 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24; Phil 2:6-11; Mt 26:14-27:66

Go to <http://www.usccb.org/> for readings online.

# The Pastor's Corner

March 26, 2023

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

In just one week's time we will enter the most sacred days of the Church's liturgical year – Holy Week – and I would like to acquaint you with some of the highlights of the services which will be celebrated during those days.

We will begin with Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion during which we commemorate the triumphal entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem astride a donkey as the people waved palm branches and hailed him as "Son of David!" As the liturgy progresses, the mood swiftly shifts to a more somber tone as we hear the story of the Passion according to St. Matthew. Do you wonder if the same crowds who shouted "Hosanna" were also the ones who screamed "Let him be crucified?" If so, this demonstrates how fickle the human heart is, and how soon an adoring crowd can turn into a lynch mob.

Several days later on Holy Thursday, we will commemorate the Lord's Supper with his closest disciples in the Upper Room. Together we will remember Jesus's mandate to wash one another's feet with the ritual enactment of the "mandatum." In addition to the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper, Jesus also called his followers to a life of selfless service, and demonstrated that in a dramatic manner by becoming their servant who was willing to get on his knees and wash their dirty feet. The Mass ends with the singing of the beautiful chant, "Pange lingua," as the Eucharist is borne to the altar of reservation in the chapel. A brief service of Compline (Night Prayer) at 9:00 PM concludes the evening.

Good Friday includes two services. The first one at 3:00 PM is the Liturgy of the Lord's Passion during which the Passion according to St. John is sung by members of the choir, during which we are asked to reflect on the meaning of truth and the Lord's hour of glory. This is followed by the procession of the cross from the chapel into the church by students in our Confirmation class, after which everyone is invited to come forward to honor the cross of our salvation. Finally, the Eucharist consecrated the evening before is shared as a reminder of the Lord's enduring presence and love.

At 7:00 PM on Good Friday our choirs will perform "The Crucifixion" by Sir John Stainer, a British composer who lived from 1840 to 1901. This work, while not as widely known as other musical settings of the Passion, is very dramatic and moving. You will undoubtedly be

familiar with the chorus "God so loved the world" as well as Passiontide hymns which everyone is invited to sing. A free-will offering will be received at the end of the service.



Holy Saturday's "day of silent waiting" gives way to the Great Vigil of Easter starting at 8:00 PM during which the new fire is blessed and the Paschal Candle is lighted from the fire. The ancient hymn "Exsultet" is then sung, recalling God's redemptive actions following the fall of Adam and Eve. Here, even the bees that produced the wax for the candle are remembered with great joy! Then the stories from the Hebrew scriptures are told: Creation, the Exodus, and the words of the prophets who foretold our salvation. The liturgy continues with the return of the Gloria and then the Alleluia, having been silent throughout the season of Lent. The Gospel of St. Matthew, recounting the announcement of the Lord's resurrection to the women who went to the tomb on Easter morning, is then proclaimed. Following what is sure to be a stirring homily by Fr. Bill, the water of the baptismal font is blessed and all of us renew our baptismal promises to reject sin, and to confess our faith in the Triune God. Water from the font is then sprinkled upon the gathered assembly.

Easter Sunday begins with a special musical prelude at 7:45 AM. First performed last year, the text by our parishioner Joan Martin and music composed by our former choir member Matthew Bridgeman, tells the story of Mary Magdalene encountering the risen Lord. Please try to be on time for this special moment which leads directly into the great hymn "Jesus Christ Is Risen Today!"

At the 10:00 AM Mass on Easter Sunday, our Gallery Choir will be joined by the children of the Church Street Singers. A musical highlight of the liturgy will be the singing of the Easter Sequence, "Christians, to the Paschal Victim offer your thankful praises." This beautiful ancient hymn serves as an introduction to the Alleluia before the Gospel proclamation.

I hope you will join us for as many of these significant liturgies as possible as we commemorate the Lord's Paschal Mystery – his Passion, Death and Resurrection.

*Fr. Tim Shreenan, OFM*

Fr. Tim Shreenan, O.F.M.  
Pastor

## Lenten Programs 2023

### A Path of Conversion: The Comfort and Challenge of the Psalms

Thursdays, March 30; 10:30 to 11:30 AM.

Registration and Zoom Link: <http://bit.ly/411kH29>

Presenter: Fr. Francis Soucy, OFM.

### Stations of the Cross

Join us for the 12:05 Mass each Friday during Lent and stay for this wonderful opportunity to meditate on the saving journey of Christ. Our No registration needed.

Fridays during Lent starting at 12:30 PM.

## Clare Gallery's \*New\* Exhibit



Clare Gallery's second 20th anniversary exhibition, *Old Growth* includes works by Connecticut artist Roberta Shea. Shea started her artistic practice later in life. She always knew she loved experimenting with painting and drawing, but when she moved to new surroundings, her creative energy motivated her to pursue a professional practice. Please go to <https://spsact.org/clare2/> for additional information on this exhibition.

An in-person artist talk is on Sunday, April 23, at 1:00 PM.

A virtual artist talk is Thursday, April 27, at 7:00 PM. To register for the virtual Artist Talk and receive the Zoom Link please go to <https://tinyurl.com/yamupeur>.



## Slow Art Day

*"It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see."*

Henry David Thoreau

"Founded in 2010, Slow Art Day is a global event (more than 1,500 museums and galleries have participated) with a simple mission: help more people discover for themselves the joy of looking at and loving art. Why "slow"? When people look slowly at a piece of art they make discoveries ... it turns out that slowing down not only helps us see more, but, ... it brings with it the joy of discovering more. What sounds like a possibly boring act... is quite the opposite. But we cannot convince people of this, they must experience it themselves. And that's an exciting discovery. It unlocks passion and creativity and helps to create more art lovers." (Excerpt from <https://www.slowartday.com/>)

Join us in the Clare Gallery, Saturday, April 15 from 3:00-4:00 PM for the Slow Art experience with our new exhibit, *Old Growth* by Connecticut artist Roberta Shea.

Register at <http://bit.ly/3n80s1E> to let us know you are coming!

## Ongoing Adult Faith Formation Programs

**Group Spiritual Reflection:** Every Tuesday via Zoom from 12:30-1:30 PM. Please [CLICK Here](#) and register to receive the Zoom meeting link. Co-facilitators: Elaine Wiatr and Mary Espinosa

**Quiet Prayer:** Every Wednesday from 7:30 - 8:00 AM. You can find the Zoom link in Monday's email.

**Taproot:** Every Wednesday during the day, from 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM. Facilitator Pat Curtis. [CLICK Here](#) to register and receive the Zoom link.

## Suggested AFF Program Offerings

Suggested program offerings can be made payable to "St. Patrick-St. Anthony Church" and mailed to 285 Church Street, Hartford, CT 06103, Attn. Pat Curtis or by going to <https://www.osvhub.com/spsact/giving/funds> and clicking on the Adult Faith Formation Give Now button. Please indicate program name with payment.

## SPSA Community Day at the Dunkin' Park!

Sunday, June 11, 1:00 PM.

Picture a warm June afternoon, the sun is shining, you are sitting in the stands, drinking a nice cold beverage watching the Yard Goats!!! Come support the team as they play against the Somerset Patriots, New York Yankee's AA-Affiliate and Defending Eastern League Champs ~and our Big Rivals! Yankee Fans take note!!!

Tickets go on sale after all Masses on April 15-16 in the Franciscan Center Lobby.



## WHAT DOES HUNGER LOOK LIKE?



In preparation for this year's Annual Walk Against Hunger on May 20, 2023 (To support our team, go to <https://tinyurl.com/yc5595x9>), the St. Patrick-St. Anthony Committee on Social Justice invites you to join them by Zoom on Monday, April 17, 2023 from 7:00 to 8:00 PM to see just what hunger looks like. This evening will consist of two short videos and group discussions. Go to <https://tinyurl.com/2fa46n43> to register and receive the Zoom link.

## Secular Franciscan Order Meeting



Is God calling you to live a life of love, peace, and holiness in the model of St. Francis of Assisi?

Join us for our gathering in the lower level of the Urban Ministry Center at St. Patrick-St. Anthony Church this **Sunday, March 26th** to learn more about the Secular Franciscan Order.

The **meeting starts at 2:00** and we will be discussing the results of the Synod discussions held in the parish.

## Palm Sunday Food Drive

We will be holding a food drive on Palm Sunday, April 1 and 2, 2023, to support and help feed the families served by the House of Bread and Hands on Hartford. The food collected will be shared with families so they can have food in their cupboards during Holy Week and on Easter.

Some of the items needed: Peanut Butter, Rice, Dried Beans, Pasta, Pasta Sauce, Tuna, Canned Chicken, Cereal, Granola Bars, Ground Coffee, Sugar and 2 Canned Vegetables. Please go to <http://bit.ly/3z0vAV6> for a complete grocery list and other information about our Food Drive.

## Exploring the Pandemic Impact on Congregations (EPIC)

SPSA is participating in a national, multi-denominational study called [Exploring the Pandemic Impact on Congregations \(EPIC\)](#), facilitated locally by the [Hartford Institute for Religion Research \(HIRR\)](#). HIRR is based out of the Hartford International University for Religion and Peace, formerly Hartford Seminary. EPIC is examining congregations' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, the long-term consequences of COVID-19 on congregational life

in the United States, and what congregational life might look like post-pandemic.

As part of this study, we invite parishioners to fill out a short online survey on your experience during the pandemic. To learn more about the study, visit <https://www.covidreligionresearch.org/> or email SPSA case study coordinator Sara Swetsoff at [sswetsoff@hartfordinternational.edu](mailto:sswetsoff@hartfordinternational.edu). There will also be leaflets with scannable QR codes outside upcoming Masses and events, for those who prefer to complete the survey from your phone.

## Sister Parish Update:

To read parts 1 and 2, go to <https://spsact.org/our-parish/sister-parish-st-genevieve/>.

### Part 3: Our Active Response

Our Sister Parish Committee, fresh off the summer's unprecedented fundraising campaign to raise teacher salaries and expand the lunch program to include all children at the St. Genevieve School, was faced with decisions. What about the teachers that lost their livelihood? Believing this to be a temporary closure, we feared we would lose these teachers and then not have the ability to open the school when the climate in the village allowed it. Further, their salaries as teachers are all that sustains the school staff, many of them lifetime employees loyal to the parish and the school. The decision was made to continue financial support of the teachers during this school closure. By supporting the teachers, we felt we also were providing for the broader community by infusing much needed funds into the local economy.

Currently, our Sister Parish Committee is exploring ways to work with others to learn what else can be done to help our brothers and sisters in these turbulent times and we will communicate with you our progress throughout these coming months. Our

intention is to remain supportive of this community, this parish, our Sister Parish, through these extraordinary times. As we said to Fr. Gaby Noel at his installation as new pastor of St. Genevieve just this fall, "This relationship deepens our understanding of what it means to live in a global Church and foster justice, human dignity and respect for people of other cultures. We hope to do all of this understanding, but not being limited by, the challenges that relationships across cultural divide, geographic distance, global health issues and periods of political unrest present."

St. Genevieve in Haiti is now faced with such challenges. It is the hope of the entire Sister Parish Committee that we remember the family of God has many faces and pray that we continue to be agents of change as together we seek to broaden our collective understanding of this situation.

We thank the St Patrick St Anthony community again for its unyielding support of our Covenant as we navigate these new, turbulent waters. Please share with us your thoughts at <http://bit.ly/3n3Xn4l> as we strive to best reflect the interests of our church community.





## Gifts & Offerings

March 12 - 19, 2023

Weekly Offering: \$5,857.00

Online Giving: \$10,228.23

**Total for Operating Budget: \$16,085.23**

*Thank you for your continued generosity!*

## Special Collection for Music Ministry April 1-2



Our special collection for the month of April will be taken for the support of our music ministry.

St. Patrick-St. Anthony is renowned in the greater Hartford area for our superb music, whether it be at a Sunday liturgy or a concert or special occasion such as Christmas Lessons and Carols.

Our three choirs (Gallery, Bass Clef and Treble Clef), our assistant organist and organ scholar, our newly-revived children's choir, the Church Street Singers, as well as our instrumental ensembles, all under the leadership of Dr. Gabriel Löfvall, strive to bring beauty and inspiration to our communal worship of God. All of this requires significant financial support, and we invite you to express your appreciation for our music ministry by giving to next week's special monthly collection. Thank you for your generosity!

## 2023 ARCHBISHOP'S ANNUAL APPEAL

It is important that when you give to any charitable organization, you are confident that the funds received are being used wisely. Be assured that your gift to the Archbishop's Annual Appeal supports the ministries and programs indicated in the 2023 Appeal literature! Organizations such as our own sandwich ministry, St. Anthony Bread for the Poor received funding from the Appeal's Vicariate Outreach Program that makes a difference in the lives of our local neighbors. Please visit the Appeal website at [www.archdioceseof-hartford.org](http://www.archdioceseof-hartford.org) to learn more and make your gift today.

**Parish Goal: \$115,000.00    Current Donations: \$24,810.00**

All funds contributed to the Archbishop's Annual Appeal are used exclusively for the purposes outlined in the Appeal literature, which can be found at <https://archdioceseofhartford.org/appeal/>. No Appeal funds are ever used for legal fees or settlements.



**Just a reminder: Our heating contract with Hartford Steam ends on April 1 and that means we won't have heat in the church. Please remember to bundle up. Our church can get cold during the early spring.**

## Mass Intentions for the Week

**Saturday, March 25, 2023**

4:00 PM    Edward Alexis, 8th Anniversary

**Sunday, March 26, 2023**

8:00 AM    Helen McDermott, 40th Anniversary

10:00 AM    Frank Perrone

11:45 AM    Rashid and Yesmine Ellis

5:00 PM    Encarnacion Nieves

**Monday, March 27, 2023**

7:30 AM

12:05 PM    Suzanne Nolan

**Tuesday, March 28, 2023**

7:30 AM    Felix (Pepe) Rodriguez

12:05 PM

**Wednesday, March 29, 2023**

7:30 AM    Joseph Monterosso

12:05 PM    Mr. & Mrs. Raul Chasse

**Thursday, March 30, 2023**

7:30 AM    For our Parishioners

12:05 PM    Thomas Timlin

**Friday, March 31, 2023**

7:30 AM    Mary V. Noto

12:05 PM    Jean & James Buggle

**Saturday, April 1, 2023**

4:00 PM    Joseph Melzen

**Sunday, April 2, 2023**

8:00 AM    John Sauntry

10:00 AM    Salvatore & Rosina Rinaldi

11:45 AM    Natalie Rice

5:00 PM    Donald Dodson

## Easter Flower Memorials:

Easter Flower Memorials can be requested by going to <http://bit.ly/3TD18tM>. Please use the gray NOTES box to indicate your memorial intention. The Deadline is March 27, 2023.

## *We are here to serve you...*

We are here to serve you. The programs and ministries listed below are just a sampling of our many offerings. Please go to [www.spsact.org](http://www.spsact.org) or call the Parish Office at 860-756-4034 for more information.

**Baptism:** Baptism of infants and young children may be celebrated during Sunday Mass and Group Baptisms on the 1st Saturday of each month outside of the seasons of Advent and Lent.

*Patricia Curtis, Pastoral Associate; 860-756-4034, EXT. 113.*

**Matrimony:** Weddings are conducted on Friday evenings, Saturday mornings, and Saturday afternoons. Couples should contact the church office at least 1 year prior to their desired wedding date.

*Carolyn Abramo, Wedding Manager; 860-756-4034, EXT. 111 or <https://spsact.org/wedding-request-form/>*

**Emmaus Grieving Parents Ministry:** The Emmaus Grieving Parents Ministry supports parents whose spiritual journey includes the death of a child. All who have suffered the loss of a child at any time – including prior to birth and many decades ago – are welcome.

*<https://spsact.org/contact-form-for-emmaus-ministry/>*

**Pastoral Care Outreach Ministry:** We offer holistic care in collaboration with the parish staff (friars, ministry coordinators, and parish nurses). Members of this team are responsible for visiting parishioners at home or in long term and short term care facilities. *Fr. John Leonard, O.F.M.; 860-756-4034, EXT. 129.*

**Prayer Network:** The St. Patrick–St. Anthony Prayer Network consists of approximately fifty parishioners who commit themselves to praying daily for those in need. *<https://spsact.org/prayer-network-prayer-request/> or Parish Office; 860-756-4034.*

**Open Hearts LGBTQ+ Ministry:** This ministry consists of two Groups: **Open Hearts** holds monthly fellowship meetings, and **Friends and Family (LGBTQ+) Support Ministry**, which supports members and allies of the LGBTQ+ community.

*For information on Open Hearts:*

*<https://spsact.org/contact-form-for-open-hearts-ministry/>*

*For information on Friends and Family contact:*

*<https://spsact.org/contact-form-for-friends-family-ministry/>*

### **Volunteering and Outreach Ministry Information:**

St. Patrick-St. Anthony invites individuals to give freely of their time and expertise in order to make a difference. Our volunteers participate in liturgical ministries as well as other forms of service to the church, the Franciscan Center for Urban Ministry and the community at large. *Allison Holst-Grubbe, Director of Volunteer and Outreach Ministry; [aholstgrubbe@spsact.org](mailto:aholstgrubbe@spsact.org); 860-756-4034, EXT. 110.*

## *St. Patrick - St. Anthony Staff*

### **PASTORAL STAFF**

Fr. Timothy J. Shreenan, O.F.M., Pastor, [tshreenan@gmail.com](mailto:tshreenan@gmail.com)

Fr. William Beaudin, O.F.M., Parochial Vicar & Guardian, [wbeaudin@gmail.com](mailto:wbeaudin@gmail.com)

Patricia Curtis, Pastoral Associate, [pcurtis@spsact.org](mailto:pcurtis@spsact.org)

Kristina DiDomenzio, Business Manager, [kdidomenzio@spsact.org](mailto:kdidomenzio@spsact.org)

Allison Holst-Grubbe, Director of Outreach/Volunteer Ministry, [aholstgrubbe@spsact.org](mailto:aholstgrubbe@spsact.org)

Fr. Michael Johnson, O.F.M., Parochial Vicar & Director of Franciscan Center for Urban Ministry, [mikeinbolivia@gmail.com](mailto:mikeinbolivia@gmail.com)

Fr. John Leonard, O.F.M., Parochial Vicar, [jleonard@spsact.org](mailto:jleonard@spsact.org)

Dr. Gabriel Löfvall, Director of Music Ministry, [glofvall@spsact.org](mailto:glofvall@spsact.org)

Fr. A. Francis Soucy, O.F.M., Parochial Vicar & Senior Associate Friar, [afsofm@gmail.com](mailto:afsofm@gmail.com)

### **ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

Carolyn Abramo, Parish & Center Administrative Assistant, [cabramo@spsact.org](mailto:cabramo@spsact.org)

Michael Boone, Office Assistant, [mboone@spsact.org](mailto:mboone@spsact.org)

Sarah Christopher, Parish Communications Director, [schristopher@spsact.org](mailto:schristopher@spsact.org)

Stacie Mawson, Saturday Receptionist, [smawson@spsact.org](mailto:smawson@spsact.org)

### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STAFF**

Deborah Pelletier, Religious Ed Team Coordinator, [dpelletier@spsact.org](mailto:dpelletier@spsact.org)

Sarah Christopher, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

Mary Gray, Family Program

Lauren Kasperowski, Traditional Program

Faith VosWinkel, Confirmation

Michelle White, 7th & 8th Grade

### **MAINTENANCE STAFF**

Orville Russell, Director of Maintenance

Gilberto Lisboa, Church Custodian

## *Please Pray for the Sick*

Paula Molitar, Joseph Shertick, Mary Kay Hannon, Greg Reed, Kathryn Eagers, Tommie Henry, Cecy Mickey, Syl Ciraulo, Mary Ertel, Mary Joyce Castafero, Tim Hindman, Judy Smith, Susan Degennaro, Rubin Espinosa and Anna Ramirez.

## Franciscan Center for Urban Ministry-Annual Report 2022

This past year our focus at the Franciscan Center has been twofold: serving the needs of our city through direct services such as our Sandwich Ministries and partnering with other non-profits and faith communities in building the Kingdom here in Greater Hartford and beyond. As we emerge into a post-pandemic world, we are committed to restoring a sense of community to a world in which the essential elements of church and society became frayed by so many forces over these past pandemic years.

To help chart our path forward, we have reconstituted the Center's Board of Directors. Its multi-generational members, come from diverse professional backgrounds, such as law, finance, and mental, as well as life experience addressing the needs of our youth, those who are homeless and those who seek affordable housing.

In terms of our partners, we have worked with Habitat for Humanity to co-sponsor an interfaith housing project in Windsor. We have also sponsored the repair of a house with Rebuilding Together Hartford and have committed to sponsor another build with them in April 2023. For 17 years, the mission program St. Francis Builds has been rebuilding homes, restoring lives, and renewing hope in communities affected by natural disasters, poverty, and climate change. In the last six months, members of this community have rebuilt homes in Houma, Louisiana, and constructed new homes in poverty-stricken Tijuana.



The pandemic greatly impacted our food security program last year. We are the only site in greater Hartford that serves food 365 days a year, and beginning in May, our numbers climbed steadily. By July, they had doubled and remained there almost to the end of the year, averaging over 2,000 meals per month. Besides our Sandwich Ministry, we have continued to serve hot meals twice a week and our teams that prepare meals for the No-Freeze Shelter have taken on a second night of providing a "Center Cooked" hot meal. Inflation, rising rents, and electricity costs have affected families on fixed incomes and our pocketbook as well. Besides providing twice as much food, our costs have risen, not only for the Sandwich Ministry but also

for the food we provide to the House of Bread, served by our volunteers three days per week. As a result of these forces, our food costs rose 67% over budget. Despite these financial challenges we have witnessed our volunteers rise to the challenge of doing twice as much work.

A large part of the Franciscan Center's work around systemic change emanates from our collaboration with the Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance (GHIAA). GHIAA is a coalition of faith communities that works to address social justice issues in Greater Hartford. We conducted several listening sessions throughout our SPSA community as well as the fifty other affiliated communities, seeking to identify the issues that concern people the most. In response to that research, GHIAA helped develop legislation to improve schools, decrease gun violence, provide more affordable housing, address environmental racism, and to tackle the mental health crisis that affecting so many young people. This is now our third year of involvement as part of GHIAA. You have likely heard me preach on these issues this past month and I



legislators to support our initiatives. Many of you have done that and some have provided testimony in favor of the proposed bills and for this, we are grateful. The advocacy pie of the Center's work is how we achieve systemic change in our world.

Our newest partnership, with Levo International, has borne much fruit this past season as many of our people participated in building hydroponic systems to grow and harvest over 2,400 pounds of produce in an urban hydroponic farm in the Hartford's north end, providing us a yet another opportunity to build and serve the community.



There is an old maxim, "Make new friends, but keep the old. One is silver and the other gold." Two of our long-term partnership at the Center continue to be strong. Sr. Beth and her student nurses from the University of St. Joseph continue to volunteer as part of our Thursday meal service, and our twenty-eight-year partnership with the House of Bread has never been stronger as evidenced by our volunteer teams who provide staffing three days a week, while the Center covers the costs of those meals.

Accompanying this narrative is the Franciscan Center's Financial Report. As many of you are aware, for its first twenty years, the Center's primary fundraiser was the Golf Tournament begun by Fr. Andrew. The proposed 2020 and 2021 tournaments were cancelled because of the pandemic. At that point, for a variety of solid reasons, the committee decided not to reconstitute it. To fill this gap, what has helped these past years is your continued generosity and support. In addition, in 2021, two out of state friends of mine provided us with \$60,000 in "seed money" for social justice-related work. These donations have funded many of the programs mentioned, such as GHIAA, Rebuilding Together Hartford, and Habitat for Humanity. We were blessed to be able to handle the additional food costs last year through the receipt of



a \$100,000 end-of-life gift from a family seeking to support the Center's ongoing work. These contributions were a Godsend, however, all three were one-time gifts and the Board will need to discuss fundraising possibilities if we are to continue our current level of engagement and service. To that end, a development committee will be formed within our Franciscan Center Board. If you have any interest/skills/ideas in the areas of fundraising or grant writing, please contact our new Director of Volunteer Outreach, Allison Holst-Grubbe at [aholstgrubbe@spsact.org](mailto:aholstgrubbe@spsact.org). Allison is serving part time in the Center to help connect volunteers with community needs and opportunities both on our Church Street campus and beyond. While not a full list of activities, we hope this gives you a glimpse of some of them.

As Pope Francis urges us to move beyond our doors and join others in being the hearts and hands of Christ where we are planted, the Franciscan Center is committed to answering that call through the various ministries described above. By serving together and building a deeper sense of community and connection, we can rise to the challenges of a world rocked by a pandemic and rebuild our post-pandemic church in mission.

Thank you again for your generous support.

Mike Johnson, OFM



906 Farmington Avenue  
West Hartford, CT 06119  
**232-1322**

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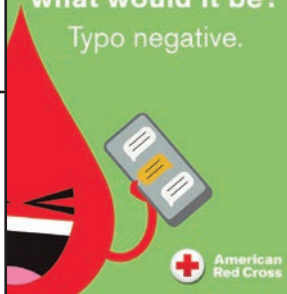
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