



CHURCH *of the*
REDEEMER
Chestnut Hill

Strategic Ministries Newsletter

November 2021

The Mystery of Service

Last year we all struggled with the turmoil created by the pandemic. We were required to physically distance from one another and adopt many new skills and habits. This meant that SMC's opportunities to volunteer in service to our neighbors were severely restricted. Thankfully, with vaccines readily available, our lives are gradually returning to normal and opportunities to serve are also becoming more available — even while devastating lockdowns continue in other parts of the world with restricted access to vaccines, such as Uganda (more on that below).

Our love of God is evidenced by how we serve others in love, even in small ways. Do you have 15 minutes to spare during lunch on a Tuesday or Thursday? Zoom in to pray with parishioners from St.

Stephen's. Relationships built through those small connections led to the drive for local Haitian refugees, described below, to provide them with important essentials in their new home. There are also opportunities to pack or drive or shop for FUEL to help feed students who are food insecure, especially with Thanksgiving supplies! You can read to students at the Blackstone-SSYP library or provide sandwiches for common cathedral's unhoused community. Epiphany is also welcoming volunteers again, and we anticipate more openings with partners as the year progresses.

Serving others is not just helpful for them, however, it also mysteriously, gradually changes us. Meeting, connecting with, and serving people — especially those who are not like us — opens us up to new perspectives. Taking action in the midst of turmoil often gives us hope. We might not be able to solve the big issues, but we can make a difference for that person or group of people. Serving others has helped grow our love for God, and given us unexpected peace.

We can't do everything, but we can do something. God has given you unique gifts, talents and experiences — let us know how you would like to put them to service.

We thank you for making this work possible and for participating in it! If you haven't yet joined in, we invite you to try one new thing.

We also invite everyone to participate in the Redeemer's annual Christmas Market & Auction on December 3rd & 4th! It is fun and an important way you can support the work of the SMC.

Debby & Aaron

Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, ... just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom

for many.

— *Matthew 20: 26, 28*



Aaron Dunn
Strategic Ministries
Co-Chair



Debby Mills
Strategic Ministries
Co-Chair

Contributing Your Time, Talents & Treasure



Dear Parishioners:

FUEL is in full swing again this fall.

To all of you who support FUEL with time, funds and/or prayer, you are truly doing God's work serving His people in their need.

Thanksgiving Treats for FUEL - Again this year, FUEL bags would

like to provide some special items for our Thanksgiving deliveries to Epiphany, St. Stephen's and Newton Public Schools. To be packed for delivery, **items need to be in the FUEL box outside the Office door no later than Sunday, November 14.** We will need 150 of each of the following:

- Instant mashed potatoes, bag or box
- Cranberry sauce
- Turkey gravy mix packets
- Pie crust mix
- Stuffing mix, bag or box
- Pie filling

Grateful thanks for your help!



The Redeemer community can help provide nourishment by helping make sandwiches, snacks, fresh fruit and beverages.

Grab and Go sandwich making: Families, singles and couples are invited to make 20-40 individually wrapped sandwiches, pack juice boxes and fresh fruit for common cathedral. Here is the [Sign Up Genius Link](#) to choose your day!





Drop-in Zoom joint prayer Tuesdays and Thursdays

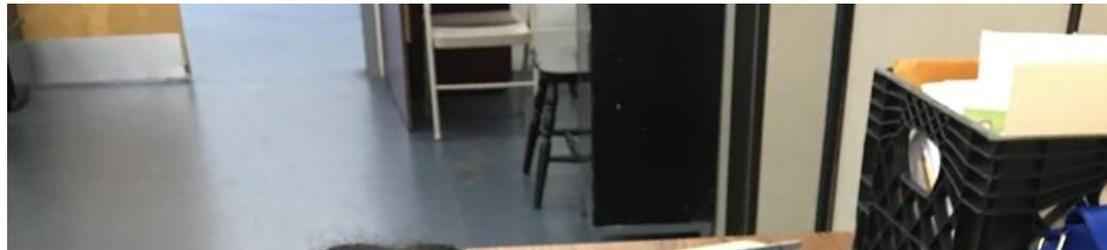
Please join us as we pray for St. Stephen's Youth Programs! Drop in any Tuesday or Thursday for ten minutes at noon to pray together with parishioners from St. Stephen's and Redeemer. Contact [Leslie Williams](#) with questions, or for the zoom link!

Volunteers needed!

The Blackstone-SSYP School Library is seeking volunteers! The library is open from 9:30-2:30pm Monday through Wednesday. We are looking for volunteers who are interested in doing read-aloud's with classes, book processing, and collection development. If interested, please contact Molly at mollykent@ssypboston.org.

ESL teacher needed

Do you know an ESL teacher we might be able to connect with SSYP? Please contact [Leslie Williams](#).





Help Haitian families newly arrived in Massachusetts!

Through Redeemer's weekly prayer group with St. Stephen's, we have learned just how desperate the situation is in Haiti, and how urgently Haitians need our help. One of our members, Fabienne, has introduced us to the Immigrant Family Services Institute (IFSI) in Mattapan, a group working hard to address the needs of arriving families.

At latest count, around 195 families displaced from Haiti have

migrated to Norwood, Randolph, Cape Cod, Sudbury, Brockton, and the Boston area. Many have babies from 2 months to 18 months. The needs are many and include diapers, baby formula, clothes, shoes, and winter jackets. (See the attached list of needed items for more details).

Please bring whatever you can to the Redeemer and place in the marked bins. We will deliver to IFSI in Mattapan as the bins fill up! Thank you for your generous support.

Monetary donations are also gratefully accepted, either through Redeemer or directly through the website <https://www.ifsu-usa.org>.

More information can be found here:

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2021/10/10/metro/mass-scrambles-provide-housing-medical-care-haitian-refugees-arrive-mexico-border/>

Please contact Leslie Williams, leswill@gmail.com, with any questions. Thank you!

Mission Partner Updates



Epiphany



Back to School!

The little ones in the Early Learning Center were here all summer, and now the Middle School students are back too! We're thrilled to see everyone again in-person, and we're also excited to welcome our new 5th-grade class to Epiphany! They have bright futures ahead of them, and we look forward to seeing them learn and grow over the next four years.





Epiphany Stars: Graduate Profile

Derrick Alfama '12

As a middle school student at Epiphany, Derrick brought laughter and excitement with him wherever he was. Though he always did well, he says he did not really appreciate the significance of an Epiphany education until 8th grade. Indeed, it was only after a serious conversation with Mrs. Forrest (Director of Graduate Support) that he really appreciated how much of an impact education could have on his future. Over time, Derrick has come to decide to use his education to give back to his community as a social worker, a goal which he is now on his way to achieving.

In addition to taking advantage of the internship opportunities available to him through Epiphany's Graduate Support Program, Derrick also participated in a community service-oriented class, *City Project*, during which he decided that his first step after college would be to return to Epiphany as a Teaching Fellow. He says that being back here has been a great opportunity for him. He is learning a lot on the job and is thrilled to reunite with many of the teachers who made such a lasting impression on him in his youth. Derrick is excited to work with students and pass on some of the same good advice he was given only a few years ago.

To learn more about what's happening at Epiphany click on

[September Always Learning newsletter.](#)





There is great comfort in familiarity and SSYP is so excited to be returning to a sense of familiarity this fall. Our students are back in our buildings every day for our B-READY afterschool program, our parent mentors are back in the classrooms at our three partner schools, our Boston College PULSE volunteers are engaging with our youth, and our community is whole again. We were so excited to see some familiar faces at our Community Open House where we shared some sweet treats and laughs with old and new friends as well as highlights about our programming and how to get involved. Our community is wide and diverse. You're part of what makes SSYP such a special place for so many! Read more about all the exciting things that are happening this fall through our [blog](#).





Common cathedral





CityReach

City Reach is an overnight urban outreach program begun in March 1996 for youth (with accompanying adults), young adults, and college students from churches of any denomination. The program gives these young people the opportunity to learn first hand about homelessness from people who have experienced it. During the 20 hour session, participants join CityReach staff in street ministry and offer hospitality, food and clothing. This is followed by times of sharing and reflection.

The program starts on Friday evening and ends on the following Saturday afternoon. Participants arrive at 7 p.m. Friday night, and are addressed by staff who are experiencing, or have experienced, homelessness. They walk through the city guided by members of *common cathedral* and end the evening with a simple worship service. Participants sleep at a local church. On Saturday morning participants offer clothing that they have collected and a simple meal to unhoused guests who come to "shop" for clothing from among the donated items. Participants form teams for street outreach, taking sandwiches and clothes to people at South Station, Copley Square, Boston's waterfront and other sites. All then eat lunch and reflect together about their experiences in light of the Gospel, write a prayer, and talk about next steps for them personally and/or as a group. Housed participants prepare to present their experiences to their home congregations.

CityReach, offered up to 8 times per academic year, is recommended for participants 14 years of age and older. For more information please read our informational packet or email sierra@commoncathedral.org. If you would like to register please

use our [registration form](#) and here is our detailed [information packet](#).



PILGRIM AFRICA

Construction of COVID Triage Center

About Pilgrim Africa



Uganda schools have been closed since July and all social and economic activities have been severely restricted since this last summer's surge in Covid-19 cases. Uganda's vaccination rate of its

summer's surge in COVID-19 cases. Uganda's vaccination rate of its 40 million people is currently less than 3.5%. Economic conditions are dire and the unemployment rate, high before the pandemic, is over 50%. While Europe and the U.S. with higher vaccination rates are returning to "normal", the pandemic has further widened the already well documented gap between developed and developing nations.

Uganda recently received a shipment of 5 million vaccines which will be directed toward such essential workers as teachers and medical professionals. Administering vaccines will take time and Beacon of Hope which has been closed since July, will not be able to have on campus instruction until January or February of next year.

Aaron Okalebo, Head of School, just completed his first year at Beacon of Hope and has done a very credible job of leading during these challenging times. To bring remote learning to those older students who are preparing to take national entrance exams, teachers are recording lessons and distributing them through Google Meet. The school's limited supply of 10 lap tops are distributed to the few families that have internet access. Students gather at these homes to access their lessons. Aaron, at the end of each day, collects the lap tops from each family. In this way roughly 190 students of the 675 total are barely keeping up with their courses.

In a normal year, tuitions from roughly 2/3 of its families, combined with funding from Pilgrim Africa do not fully cover Beacon of Hope's \$410,000 annual budget. Beacon of Hope depends on donations from individuals and entities such as the Church of the Redeemer who give to Pilgrim Africa but designate Beacon of Hope as the recipient. Recently support from the Redeemer, ear-marked for hiring A level teachers to improve the school's curriculum, has been used to provide stipends for the 30 faculty members. The pandemic has put on hold the much needed investment in faculty and the

schools infrastructure.

In response to Covid-19, Beacon of Hope raised funds for the conversion of one of its buildings into a COVID clinic. The building has been restored (see above), but the clinic is not yet operating as Pilgrim is waiting on staffing and funding from the government. After the pandemic, with enhanced classroom space, the building will resume its academic purpose.



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