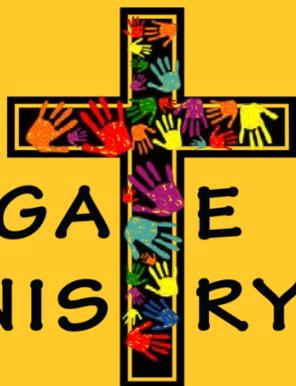


STONEGATE MINISTRY



Newsletter

“Working together to build a stronger, kinder and more just community”

A WORD FROM THE BOARD



It is lovely in the Fall to see all the colour around us as the changing leaves light up the neighbourhood – and brightens our mood as well. This year, the gradual easing of COVID adds to the sense of hope and anticipation and has allowed many of our programs to move from online to either fully in-person, or a hybrid mixture of the two.

People who have felt so isolated for several years are excited to see friends and to have someone to talk to face to face. Women from our *Circle of Friends* are thrilled to gather again each Tuesday for lunch and learning – getting help physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Younger women and girls are delighted to be part of our *Amplify* program at the Jean Augustine Centre where they increase and develop new life skills together.

Demand on our *Food Bank* has also never been so high – much busier than during the pandemic, and much busier than before the pandemic. Understandably, the main cause of the recent increase is the current high inflation, especially for food. We have had to ask volunteers to work two or three times their usual hours each food bank day in order to process the higher number of needy clients. We have also had to purchase food in quantities like never before – and we aren’t even certain how long we can keep up with the increasing need. Fortunately, our many supporters have stepped up by organizing food drives, or by encouraging others to help financially.

One of our greatest frustrations this year has been our inability to restart our *Great Finds* clothing store to again meet the need for affordable apparel for those most vulnerable in our neighbourhood. We are aware that this need for appropriate clothing will balloon even more as we approach wintertime, especially for children.

The answer to this need may be obvious – *find an appropriate store front site*. However, this has been a frustrating process as we have diligently watched for store sites to become available, primarily in, but not limited to the Lake Shore area. While we need enough space to adequately serve our clients, a few that looked attractive, offered even more space than we needed at a cost that was prohibitive. Many that became available were gobbled up by cannabis merchants and sadly, others refused us *because we were a charity!* Some were to be demolished and redeveloped so only offered a very short-term lease (one or two years), and usually

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OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Stonegate Ministry is an alliance of local Christian churches working in partnership with the community through shared resources, offering programs and opportunities to build healthy relationships, strong families, a sense of belonging and a deeper relationship with God. We endeavour to address the needs of the whole person and families to bridge toward a better life and to be a faithful voice to ensure everyone in the community is treated with justice and Christian compassion.

(continued from page 1) these would have needed considerable investment to repair and refresh in order to be useable.

Despite these obstacles, be assured that we will continue to search for the right storefront as this is desperately needed in order for the Ministry to meet the needs of those in our neighbourhood.

Please continue your prayers on our behalf. We believe that we are only stewards of this ministry and that the right location will become available, allowing us to once again minister to the needy in our community. We also ask for your generous financial support through a mailed cheque, an online contribution or by e-Transfer which we are in the process of setting up. Details are on our website www.stonegateministry.ca

We are truly grateful for your ongoing faithful support.

God bless,

Peter Patterson, Chair Stonegate Ministry Board



"God Coffee and Me" goes to camp.

We often share that the weekly meeting around a coffee table at Nimman's Thai Restaurant is much more than a study program. It is a 'close but not closed' circle of friends. And it's a circle that refuses to be confined to a weekly meeting space. True friendships cannot be boxed in.

A recent example: 6 members of the "God, Coffee and me" circle joined many others for four glorious days at Camp Koinonia, near Parry Sound. Two of them summarized the experience in this way:

"Everyone seemed so joyful! Another thing is that I got to explore a trail I never knew about with a friend.

I always appreciate all the planning involved in the few days, and how the day is structured around growing and celebrating our Christian faith and sharing Christian community."

"Camp meant I could spend quality time with my church family while enjoying Christian leadership, delicious food, singing around the campfire and tons of fun doing a variety of activities: boating, swimming, badminton, basketball, board games.... Yes, I did them all! The weekend was just not long enough".

Nice, eh? We look forward to other opportunities to connect beyond the coffee shop. There's something special about *growing together, sharing together and serving together.*



"God, Coffee and Me" has resumed weekly Bible Study gatherings each Tuesday, 2:45pm at Nimman's Thai Restaurant, 2451 Lake Shore Blvd. W. It may be a bit late for a quick dip in the lake, but it's never too late to pull up a chair and join the open circle. We'd love to welcome you. And the coffee is on us.

Bruce Smith, on assignment to Stonegate Ministry

CHANGES OF THE SEASON

I love fall. It is my favourite season of the year. It is a time when summer is passing and winter is approaching, but the beauty and vibrancy of the leaves changing colours and the cool air pushing out the heavy heat of the hot summer air is soothing for me. There is something awesome about experiencing the changes of the season.

As an organization, we too have walked through many seasons even in a short period time. We have seen transitions of operation, service and duty. Much has changed during this time which has led us to make changes and serve the ever-growing needs of our community in the best ways that we know how.



The effects of our current world situation has not left our organization untouched. Many of those who have fled the devastation of the war in Ukraine have stepped through our doors looking for help and hope for their families. Inflation and short supply of affordable housing hits low-income families the hardest. As the need in our community intensifies, I am drawn back to our Vision Statement, inspired by Micah 6:8 “Working together to build a stronger, kinder and more just community.” It will take your support to make this work.

The programs provided at Stonegate ministry serve a variety of different needs in our community. We provide **food access** for families struggling with food security. We **support our seniors** by providing safe spaces for social interactions. We help foster **mental wellness** by providing counselling resources and life coaching opportunities. And we continue to invest in the academic **future of kids** by promoting free reading materials and interactive sessions for discovery. These are just a few of the ways that we strive to fulfill the vision.

There are many ways to help, here are a few:

- Volunteer at the Christ Church St James Food Pantry
- Prepare a single meal or encourage your group to prepare several meals for the Circle of Friends
- Make a food or financial donation
- Tell a friend about Stonegate Ministry
- Follow our social media platforms @StonegateMinistry
- Add the ministry to your prayer list

I want to thank all of you who have joined in the efforts to help our community in these challenging times. Your efforts and dedication have helped to change many lives and provide hope to the disadvantaged in our community.

All seasons in life are indeed temporal and, in this understanding, we lay our hope in a more eternal promise of peace, joy and love through our Lord.



Natalie Sharpe,
Director of Ministry Programs

HOLD THE DATE!

THE STONEGATE MINISTRY ANNUAL ONLINE FUNDRAISER FEATURING OUR STAFF AND MUSIC SELECTIONS FROM OUR MEMBER CHURCHES WILL BE ON NOVEMBER 17. MORE DETAILS WILL BE SENT CLOSER TO THAT DATE. HOPE YOU CAN TUNE IN.

OUR FOOD BANK SETS A NEW RECORD!

The number of families needing our food bank continues to climb. September set a new record as we served 368 families during the month. Food inflation has hit everyone but hardest hit are the underprivileged, many of whom we regularly serve. It also impacts our costs as we are forced to shop retail ourselves looking for specials to ensure we can meet the needs. Both Kingsway Baptist and Aldergrove United churches ran a Thanksgiving food drive for which we are very grateful. Maybe your church would consider doing the same?

For a period of 8 weeks that started on Monday July 4, 2022, Stonegate Ministry welcomed Andrew Blackwell, a summer student, to our ministry team. Andrew performed duties for the Ministry and CCSJ Food Pantry for the months of July and August. In addition, through one of our partner churches, Royal York Road United Church, we were also blessed to have another summer student, Evan Summers. Evan was able to work at Christ Church St. James Food Pantry for July and August as well.

Both students were available to help receive food and supply deliveries, organize, sort and pack donations as well as serve the families who attended our food bank. Andrew and Evan were a tremendous help to CCSJ Food Pantry, and we thank them for all the work they did during the summer!

We need and would be most appreciative to receive your food or financial donation. Items that are most needed are listed below:

- Canned meat or fish
- Cereal/Oatmeal/Granola
- Crackers and Cookies
- Flour and Baking Products
- Soup
- Canned vegetables or fruit
- Granola/Snack/Protein bars
- Sugar/sugar alternatives, spices
- Beans (either dry or canned)
- Rice, Pasta/Tomato Sauce
- Powdered milk/ milk alternatives
- Baby Food & Formula
- Tea/Coffee
- Nutritional Supplements (Ensure, etc.)



Thank you for your continued support,
Jeannie Martinez,
CCSJ Food Pantry Co-Director and Great Finds Manager

CONTACT US

By phone 416-255-6282 or by email office@stonegateministry.ca

Your donation is important to maintain our outreach during this difficult time. You can contribute:

- By cheque mailed to 71 Riverview Gardens, Toronto, M6S 4E6
- Online using the “Donate Now” button on our website stonegateministry.ca
- By e-Transfer – See details on our website stonegateministry.ca

All donations are promptly acknowledged, and a receipt will be sent at year end. Thank you for your prayers and ongoing financial support, and may God bless you and keep you safe during this trying time.

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