

Serving the Homeless Community

Justice and Mercy for the Oppressed-Homeless Persons in Long Beach

Do you feel a calling to help homeless people? Please consider this information and spiritual experience. Here are some options for volunteering your time and support or monetary gifts.

- a. Biblical and Theological basis, John Wesley view of church
- b. Selected programs to consider

Does Long Beach have a skid row? Not exactly, homeless people encamp along the San Gabriel and LA river overpasses, at the Gumbiner Park (south east of Atlantic and 7th), on the beach or sidewalk or behind some grocery stores.

A. Biblical and Theological basis; John Wesley view of church

Volunteering to help homeless persons may enhance your spiritual journey or perhaps jump start it. Your help could offer conscious contact with God. When you feed or clothe the hungry you are doing it for Jesus: Matthew 25:40.

Some of the liberation theologians in South America emphasized the importance of working with the poor. Gustavo Gutierrez was a Peruvian Priest of Indian ancestry. Borrowing from Liberation Theology for Armchair Theologians, he writes that “God is found through one’s neighbors. Specifically, he proclaims, To Know God is to do justice, is to be in solidarity with the poor person.” Also, he says that Theology becomes a reflection of actions to end human suffering.

Jon Sobrino’s view is that God chooses those who are oppressed in history – the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the alien, sick the prisoner, - and makes them the principal means of salvation, just as God brought Jesus to bring salvation to the world.

Pertinent biblical support appears to be

Psalm 103:1,2 6 and Matthew 25:32-40

Psalm 103:1,2,6

¹Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me,
bless his holy name.

²Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits-

⁶The Lord works vindication and justice for all who are oppressed

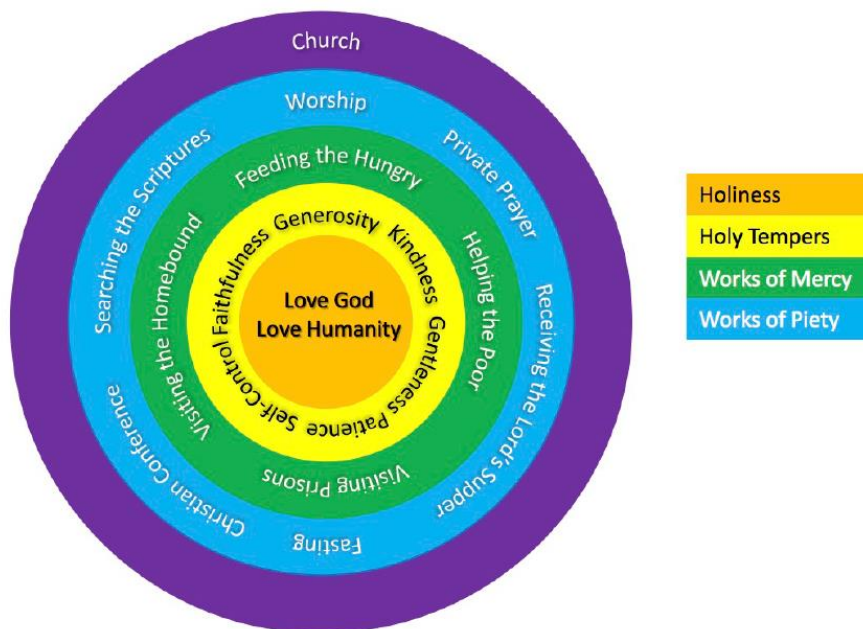
Matthew 25:34-40

³⁴ “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

³⁷ “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

⁴⁰ “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

Whatever you do for the least of these you do for Jesus or God. In recent sermons Pastor Sturgess has talked about John Wesley’s model for the church. It starts with focusing on our holiness and temperament. This circular illustration emphasizes the role of works of mercy- feeding the hungry and helping the poor. Pastor Melinda has spoken of ‘being the church.’



B. Selected Programs

Please consider if you are being called to contribute gifts of time or dollars to one or more of these ongoing efforts. (Note content is will be periodically updated)

1. Los Altos UMC

- a. support the monthly lunch(or meal) at St Luke's Episcopal Church at 7th and Atlantic, near downtown; second Saturday.
Presently sack lunches are prepared in advance and three people serve the lunch on the second Saturday of the month
- b. support Habitat for humanity for the housing challenged.
Volunteers help on build projects several times a year
- c. Our Crop walk raises funds that are sent to groups that fund homeless programs locally and at the national level.
In October the event involved a collective automobile drive
- d. Food Finders
- e. Broken Loaf Food Pantry, support First UMC of Lakewood
- f. Youth- Super Bowl of Caring

2. St Joseph Catholic Church (6180 E Willow Street)

Movement for a Better World operate several charitable endeavors

(these efforts are the normal ones; some are altered due to covid)

- a. Prepare 320 Sandwiches/lunches on Wednesday, deliver to Catholic Charities and to nearby transitional housing center for 120 people
- b. Serve Buffet breakfast at the City of LB Homeless Multiservice center on third Monday
- c. Prepare 100 hygiene kits; distribute to Catholics Charities or homeless encampments from LB to skid row. On Oct 3,4 the church held a collection drive for he hygiene kits



Tim and Eric operating the hygiene kit drop off at St Joseph's Church on Oct 4

On fifth Sundays of month, St Joe volunteers accompany nuns to distribute hygiene kits. The nuns are from St Emydius Parish in Lynnwood. Parishioners distribute, while nuns pray with encamped people)

- d. Holiday Support to 100 families (food, blankets) on Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter (gather and distribute)



Praying and delivering hygiene kits to an encampment

3. St Luke's Episcopal Church (7th and Atlantic, LB)

a. Shower program (and clothes closet)

Each Saturday from 7:30 am to 12:30 am , hot shower, clean clothing , and a meal for about 75 men and 25 women.



Vinnie and Michael managing the men's shower at St Lukes

Volunteers are needed to hand out tickets for and coordinate, assist with showers, meals, clothes and shoes.

Gail needs ten volunteers every Saturday. They manage the showers, distribute clothes, shoes, blankets and food tickets. The same ten people are relied on each week; they need a break and not to have to work every Saturday.



Julie Lie operating Mens clothes closet at St Lukes



Cathy P operating the water drink cart at St Lukes

b. Manna Meals-Meals on Saturday

Sack Lunch meals every Saturday. Los Altos provides the meal on the second Saturday.

St Gregory's provides the third Saturday meal; St Francis Episcopal of Palos Verdes does the first Saturday. Project Optimum does the fourth Saturday.

- c. Urban Community Outreach** Support services on Saturday- Julies Lie (see photo) seeks funds for her program to help people at St lukes to make ends meet. She also mentors and offers advice.

4. First Congregational Church (241 Cedar Avenue)

Sunday afternoons

Drop In Center (on hold due to Covid)

- a. Serve Meal
- b. Staff Computer lab, relaxing day room, help with emails, document saving service
- c. Provide pantry food, hygiene kits, clothing, blankets, pet food (provided by Urban Community Outreach)

5. St Gregory Episcopal Church (6201 E Willow)

- a. Provide the lunch at St Luke's on the first Saturday.
- b. Collect shelf stable foods and operate food bank on the first Wednesday of each month

6. Christian Outreach in Action (3rd and Linden)

Meals are served every day

Breakfast 6am to 9am ;Dinner 4pm-6:45pm

Food Bank

Every Tuesday and Thursday; 8:45 am-12:30 pm

Clothing Bank

Every Friday; 8:45 am-2 pm

7. Working to understand and transform the roots the injustice –

“un-balance” -- the lack of equity -- that contributes to the causes of houselessness and the marginalization of the poor

(in development, with Pastor Dodge)

8. Southwest Community Center

The Southwest Community Center is a resource center located in Santa Ana for homeless and low-income individuals and families, providing meals, food distribution, showers, and other forms of assistance such as tax preparation, six times per year.

9. **Acknowledgements** – Thanks for the hard work done by Gail Mutke at St Luke’s Episcopal Church and Tim Clark at St Joseph Catholic Church. Thanks for suggestions, nudges, and comments for this proposal from Pastors Mark Sturgess and Melinda Dodge, Bruce Thompson, Sadie Sacks, Donna Drukker, Cal Poissot, Susan McVay and Barbara Roberts.

10. **What about you.** Please call Michael Naylor to discuss these options.
714 328 1503