



SAINT JAMES' IN THE CITY THE FIRST 100 YEARS

A hundred years from now, when the future parishioners of Saint James' contemplate the bicentennial of this church, we would like them to know what work we considered to be at the heart of all our missions. The following was written by Steve Yeazell with assistance from Betsy Anderson, and Emily and Andy Maverick.

Feeding the Hungry: Saint James' Soup Kitchen, Food Pantry, and Hope-Net

The Scriptures tell us that the faithful must feed the hungry. But we can no longer fulfill this responsibility as in Biblical times, by allowing stalks of grain to remain in our fields for gleaning. As with the Church itself, the story of St. James' response to hunger has moved from individual acts of charity to institutionalized forms. And as with the Church itself, St. James' has responded to emerging needs.

In the mid-1980s Cecil Carnes, a long-time parishioner retired from a career teaching at Marlborough School, realized that the community around us had many hungry people and began informally to collect and distribute food. In the three decades since Cecil's charitable impulse, scores of parishioners-as well as those outside the parish, drawn into this work by its basic humanity-have helped collect, cook, and distribute food to hundreds of hungry people each month. The task of organizing this effort has been gently handed down as family and personal circumstances have evolved: think about whether you should be next!



Cecil Carnes

Just as apostolic-era house churches grew to institutions, so have St. James's efforts reached beyond personal impulses of charity. In 1988 St. James' helped found Hope-Net, an interfaith collaborative of congregations in the mid-Wilshire area that has coordinated feeding and family housing programs while helping to keep it rooted in our several faith traditions.

Hope-Net has in turned linked us with a broader non-profit community of food banks all over Los Angeles -as our early, personal charity has become part of a larger effort. Every Tuesday and Thursday morning a line starts at a door many of us have never noticed, just to the west of the stairs to the patio garden: at 8, bags of food, collected

and assembled by volunteers, are handed out. Thanks to the generosity of St. James' parish and school community, our food supply even in lean times has always reached to the end of the line!



Food Pantry Volunteers

As hunger spread, so did a newer scourge-AIDS. And, in 1992, following a diocesan - and scriptural - example, St. James' began a special ministry, to AIDS patients. On the first Monday of every month, volunteers gather to make bag lunches for the scores of patients, some of whom wait six or seven hours to for their medical appointments at County Hospital . Notes from the patients and their families tell us how much this modest gesture matters.

Back at home, we began to discover that many hungry people also lacked the ability to prepare the kind of food we distributed at the pantry. In 1995 an inspired group approached St. James' with the proposal that we expand our feeding ef-



forts to embrace people who had neither homes nor kitchens. St. James' responded enthusiastically, expanding on the services originally proposed, and the Soup Kitchen was born. It has become an important part not only of our ministry but also of the net that serves "even the least among us." On

Friday afternoons a line assembles at the steps on Wilshire, and when the gates open more than a hundred people line up for a hot meal and an equally warm welcome-and, if they wish, a prayer.