

PLYMOUTH COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY

By Mary-Alice Wilbanks

TCC has supported the Plymouth Community Food Pantry for many, many years, initially as a quiet, informal service to individuals in need. Whenever Rev. Vardell Swett learned of these situations, he would contact Barbara Plumb and ask her to provide food for them. Lois Barnes, our church secretary, assisted her in the important ministry of managing our Food Bank. Soon other churches and Scout troops joined in their endeavors by also collecting food, filling our shelves and distributing to those in need.

The Food Bank was originally housed downstairs in our church, the room now referred to as the "Trustee's Closet". Food donations were provided by our church members along with Scouts, schools, other churches, organizations and individuals in town.

Roland & Ellen Anderson took over the responsibilities in 1995 (23 years ago). They initially received guidance from Captain Ron Cox of the Salvation Army in Bristol. His support gave them a better understanding for serving those who truly were in need and confidence on running the program for the community. They also attended meetings with Food Providers in the Greater Bristol area and the Litchfield Hills Service Unit of the Salvation Army.

Initially they helped 12 – 15 families per week and worked with the Plymouth Human Services to provide needy families with complete Thanksgiving dinners and turkeys to clients for Christmas. By the year 2000, 7 churches were donating food to the bank and six churches were providing volunteer workers. The Food Bank was bursting its seams! Our needs had been presented to town officials who were working to bring about the best solution. As of April 1, 2002, the Plymouth Community Food Bank was completely in the hands of Human Services.

When the garage across the street, became available, refurbished and painted, it became the new home of the Plymouth Community Food Pantry. Years later, when it again became inadequate for the town's needs, it moved into its current home, on Fairview Ave, thanks to the generosity of St. Cyril & Methodius Orthodox Church. It continues to provide a much needed service to many individuals in our town and thanks to all the wonderful volunteers throughout our town, it continues to provide an extremely necessary service to those in need.

As you can see, TCC has a long history with the Plymouth Food Pantry. As a congregation, we feel strongly about continuing to supply it with food and volunteers. We can do it and add an element of interest and fun by honoring each other on our special days. This can be done by reintroducing our **Celebration Easel**. All you have to do is **note the date and event, ie, birthday, anniversary, graduation, etc.**, for the benefit of our entire church family on the easel. We in turn, will commemorate those special events by donating food to the Food Pantry, supplementing the Food Wagon donations. All happy events will then be published in our Monthly Newsletters. (Note: For the shy ones, unless specifically noted on the easel, i.e., exact anniversary or birthdays, will not be included below.)