

Calvary St. Andrew's



URBAN MINISTRY 2008

Calvary St. Andrew's Urban Ministry Catch the fire of the Spirit of God through service in the world.



In the heart of the city, Calvary St. Andrew's Presbyterian Parish is one of the leaders in Urban Ministry. It touches the hearts and lives of people who are highly diverse. **Urban Ministry is at the core a relationship with people.** That relationship

involves a commitment to seek the health and vitality of the city and the people in its neighborhoods. A friend of the parish called us a "**Good Samaritan Community**". "You not only see people others do not, but you go out of your way to help them". That statement is a great summary of how we view our ministry and mission in the city. We help people through direct service and empowerment. And we have a significant pool of volunteers who give of their time and energy to make a difference in other people's lives. We are blessed that in giving, one receives.

Together we build partnerships to address city issues from recreation and youth to community development.

A Joy and a Heartbreak

Urban Ministry is both a joy and a heartbreak. We encounter people whose lives have hit rock bottom and are unable provide for their own basic needs. That reality engages us in compassion, a ministry of presence, advocacy and direct service. And we draw to our urban ministry passionate people, ready to work for justice and collective change. As willing volunteers their lives are a living joy and witness to God's grace. They reach out to support, encourage and train others in life skills. These folks find in our urban ministry a community of social action where



faith in practice is the norm and where the skills they bring are recognized and valued.

Volunteers like to make a difference in people's lives.

Urban ministry is rarely economically profitable. It is difficult put a price tag on saving a life that once hit bottom and is now on the rise. What price can be named for the support, counsel and community encouragement a congregation gives to a man like James? He's a former Viet Nam Veteran, drug dealer,

prison inmate and addict. *That was his former life.* **God has done a new thing** for now James is a vital part of our ministry as he counsels others, serves in the Food Ministry and bears witness to a transformed life in Christ. Urban ministry is filled with people like James who find a spiritual home at Calvary St. Andrew's and who share God's grace and love.

Our ministry provides a safety net for the working poor and those on disability or public service. Charlotte, a single mother with five children on DSS receives not only food for her children, but also food for her soul. Our Food Ministry provides fresh vegetables, meat, bread and emergency food to sustain families like Charlotte's. It's a place where people know her name, where people care about her children's education and wellbeing. James and Charlotte have been able to make life-altering decisions for their own well being and that of their families because of the support, encouragement and partnership the parish provides.



Jesus' life and ministry is a living witness to the Grace of God. Jesus shared with a diversity of people a profound hope in a God of love whose power to reclaim life is greater than death. Much of urban ministry is intangible for it may take years to see results. Change takes time to occur. Calvary St. Andrew's held to a vision of a vital urban neighborhood, long before it was fashionable to live in the city. We rolled up our sleeves with residents, bankers, and business people to form the South Wedge

Planning Committee, Inc. to provide staff and volunteer support to address the urban issues of land use planning, vacant and boarded houses and a lackluster commercial area. Today the South Wedge Planning Committee Inc. is a vital neighborhood preservation company with whom we partner. Many of our members and friends are active in community revitalization issues such as block clubs, community gardens, reduction in violence and other quality of life issues.



Our urban ministry program hosts two to three work camps a year where youth and adults from another community come into the city to partner with us to improve the community. Paint a house, fix the steps of an elderly resident, bake cookies at South Avenue Recreation Center with youth or assist a very ill woman with her garden, are ways our work camps have touched the lives of community residents. **Through hands-on activities, both the giver and receiver are partnered so that God's joy abounds as new learning unfolds.**

Youth ministry in the city is a challenge for the resources and support are at a different level than in the surrounding communities. Because urban ministry is about relationships, we have been able to support our youth to make healthy life choices that involve education, social involvement, care for one another and for the environment. And we've opened channels for exciting involvement with adults in the parish to put their skills to use, be it in participating

in mentoring in the judicial system, or with neighborhood kids, or in Aids Education.

The city embraces a wonderful diversity of people that live in the neighborhood and metropolitan area. Among our vital urban programs is our partnership with several Group Homes for specially challenged individuals. John and his mom moved to the city and soon found our parish. Through their active commitment to independent living, John moved into a group home and soon brought his friends to church. That act began a long-term partnership between CSA and his group home. The ministry has expanded to include two additional homes. Our friends have found a spiritual home in our ministry and through them our community has experienced a broader image of God and been strengthened by the Holy Spirit.



Beyond our ministry with specially challenged people has been our transformation in the breadth of ministry with gay and lesbian folks. Ginny and her partner Marsha found that the “church of their childhood” was not a welcoming place for gay and lesbian people. Imagine their surprise to experience a community that not only welcomed them as a couple, but engaged them to share their faith and to become active participants. In urban ministry we make the connection between spirituality and health. Through programs such as a spirituality weekend with the Reverend Wayne Muller, Sabbath became a living breathing spiritual discipline that renewed their relationship. Ginny and Marsha brought their

friends to church and now the friends serve in our urban ministry.



Our congregation has a distinguished history of social engagement. CSA founded the first kindergarten in the City of Rochester and a dressmaking factory for young girls in 1906. CSA was a catalyst for the establishment of the Interfaith Jail Ministry and the South East Area Coalition. Yet, there’s another side to our distinguished history resides in the stunning church artwork. Emily Sibley Watson dedicated the Epiphany mural in honor of her mother Elizabeth Sibley. The Ellwanger family donated a lovely stained glass window depicting a ring of roses in honor of organist Henry Ellwanger. The centerpiece of the sanctuary is a strikingly impressive Tiffany window that depicts the women at the tomb. Installed in 1900, the window speaks of the resurrection in vivid color and attention to detail. It is a meditative masterpiece that rises high above the Italian marble altar designed by George Haushalter.



“Draw the circle wide” one member said of what it means to embody being a Good Samaritan Community. God’s vision of who we need to be in ministry will always draw the circle wider, inviting others into new life and health.

Our pastor, The Reverend Judy Lee Hay says, “Urban Ministry involves building communities of faith. We partner with neighbors, business, urban and suburban churches, city staff and the Presbytery of Genesee Valley to address the crucial issues of our day. An effective urban parish builds partnership.

Our worship service is Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m.

Our ministry extends to the **Dominican Republic** where we’ve partnered with missionary Joanna Petersen to support the development of fish farms, sustainable agriculture and health care promoters. Several groups from the congregation have visited the Dominican Republic to learn and to develop partnerships.



Don Tirabassi, Director of Music



Joanna Peterson and friends

We invite you to join us.