



# THE FRANCISCAN KITCHEN

748 South Preston Street  
Louisville, KY 40203

*Dedicated to providing for the nourishment of God's family.*

**December  
2025  
Issue**

## *It's Time for Our Christmas Giveaway*



Our annual Christmas Giveaway tradition continues again this year on Thursday, December 25 from 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. We are looking to provide our regular guests and families some basic clothing, toiletry, and hygiene items as the winter weather sets in. The items most needed are: Men's Boxer Brief Underwear (Sizes L, XL, & XXL), Men's White Undershirts (Sizes M, L, XL, & XXL), Ladies Underwear (Sizes 6/M) & 7/L), and travel size (2-3 oz.) Toothpaste, Shampoo, and Lotion. We can also use Backpacks, Blankets/Throws, Men's gloves, and Adult Hoodies (Sizes L, XL, & XXL). We will provide a boxed lunch for our guests as well.

To contribute any of these items, you can drop them off during the week between 8:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m., no later than Monday, December 15th. You can also see what we need for the box lunch by going to our SignUpGenius page, which can be accessed with the QR Code on p. 2 of the newsletter or by going to the Sign Up button on our website.

If you have a question or would like more information, you can contact us at 502-589-0140.

Thank you for helping us spread the joy of Christmas to our brothers and sisters in need!

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### 2025 STATISTICS

120,854 meals  
served (through  
11/12/25)

## Volunteer Profile - Jim Ofcacek



Jim Ofcacek first answered a call to faith-inspired service in his early teen-age years when he followed in his older brother and role model's footsteps by attending the then Louisville-based St. Thomas seminary, along with 60 or so other freshmen (including Kitchen Board member Gary Roth) in the late 1960s. While the road to the priesthood did not reach its conclusion, Jim discovered other ways to make a difference in people's lives, which led him to the Kitchen in August 2018. He credits longtime Kitchen volunteer Jerry Ray with encouraging his involvement, which began in the humble environment of the tray room, in the pre-COVID days of indoor dining, that Jim describes as "like being in a steam bath." Eventually, Jim migrated to the equally arduous duty of being the pots and pans man on Mondays, where he

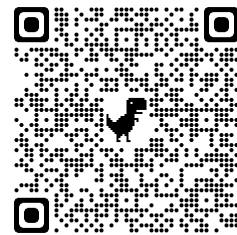
serves alongside fellow St. Aloysius parishioners Mike and Michelle Tucci. For the past four years, Jim has promoted volunteer recruitment by speaking at all the masses at St. Aloysius, and Mike and Michelle are among the fruits of Jim's effort.

Jim retired from a career at Chevron, where he assessed needs for the company's packaging facilities, which included touring limestone mines, offering tech support, and managing sales in the tri-state Ohio River valley region. Thanks to Chevron's generous retirement plan, the Kitchen also benefits from Jim's financial support and volunteer service on an annual basis.

Not surprisingly, a major focus of Jim's life is his family. He and his wife, Kathy have been married for 52 years, and spend lots of time with their two grandsons who live in Louisville. A staple of family gatherings at the Ofcacek home is likely to involve games of ping-pong, at a table that Jim has had since the late 1970s (challenging Jim to a game would surely be a fool's errand).

The other activity that occupies Jim's free time is photography, a pursuit that includes participation in a photography club and leads him in a variety of directions that bring much joy.

What may have been the Archdiocese of Louisville's loss several decades ago when Jim discerned another path for his life has clearly been a gain for the Franciscan Kitchen, St. Aloysius Church, and the many people Jim has encountered in his faith journey. We're grateful he found his way to the Kitchen!





# GIVING TUESDAY

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2025**

**#GivingTuesday** has been celebrating philanthropy in all its forms since 2012. Occurring immediately after the Thanksgiving holiday, it seeks to stand out in contrast to the retail shopping excesses of Black Friday and Cyber Monday and encourage generosity as the appropriate response to the gratitude we feel in the holiday season. Joining with thousands of organizations in promoting the message of this day, we ask you to consider gifts of time, talent, and treasure that help make our communities better places to live.

As we conclude our 45th year of feeding the hungry, we acknowledge the generosity of volunteers that cook, prepare and serve our daily meal, the donors that support us with financial contributions, and the countless donations of food items from organizations, businesses, and people from throughout the area. We could not do what we do without this vital support.

Here are the ways you can give on this special day -

- \* Share a story on social media about why you believe in and support the mission of the Franciscan Kitchen
- \* Use the enclosed envelope to send a contribution to us or use the QR code below
- \* Help us prepare and or serve a meal by going to our SignUpGenius schedule (use the QR code on p.2)

Thank you!



## A Reflection from the Franciscan Spirit Blog by Tyler Grudi, OFM



We had just walked out of a McDonald's with our to-go bag in hand when someone asked us for a bite to eat. My friar classmate Phil and I would occasionally escape from Mission Santa Barbara during our novitiate for a small snack. On this particular day, we settled on value menu chicken sandwiches and a French fry to split. But we hadn't factored in this specific panhandler's request. Surely we didn't have enough food to spare, or so I thought.

Phil peered into the practically empty bag and forked over one of our small chicken sandwiches. The man walked away with a smile on his face and a thank-you on his lips, but I had a knot in my stomach. That was my sandwich, I thought to myself. I had looked forward to this guilty pleasure all week. Now what?

Phil revealed the remaining chicken sandwich and, like a priest at consecration, tore the sandwich in two, offering me my portion. "It's not a lot, but it'll do," Phil said, shrugging off my obvious disappointment. But bite by bite, we savored our sandwich halves and a few fries till we were both miraculously full. We walked back to the mission that day content with the little we had to share. I wondered, why was I so immediately guarded and unwilling to share? What was I lacking in that moment that I couldn't give to a fellow human being in need?

Phil's offering may seem like a small gesture, but even a small offering of love to those who are struggling is what Pope Leo XIV has described as "the ordinary path to conversion for those who wish to follow Christ with an undivided heart."

On this year's feast of St. Francis, Pope Leo published his first Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi te*, continuing a document started by the late Pope Francis on the burning heart of the Church's mission: love for the poor. "Offerings, when born of love, not only alleviate the needs of one's brother or sister, but also purify the heart of the giver, if he or she is willing to change."

Phil's small gesture of love helped me see inside my own heart and come to terms with the bitterness that was inside. Phil recognized that "the dignity of every human person must be respected today, not tomorrow." Like a good Franciscan, Phil was open to change and ready to respond to the needs of the poor right in front of him.

Love for the poor isn't optional. Pope Leo makes it clear that God has a preference for the poor and outcast. Therefore, we also must have a preference for the poor. Every Christian should demonstrate a "commitment to the poor and to removing the social and structural causes of poverty." When our love for the poor is lacking, we need conversion.

## Reflection (continued)

St. Francis writes in his Testament that, when he was in sin, he hated lepers. But God led Francis among the lepers, and his bitterness turned to sweetness. Leo says that “in the person of a leper, Christ himself embraced Francis and changed his life.” The poor have the ability to change our lives today too, if only we allow them. We need to risk being touched by the poor because “contact with those who are lowly and powerless is a fundamental way of encountering the Lord of history.”

If Scripture and tradition are so clear about the poor’s place in God’s kingdom, Pope Leo wonders “why many people continue to think that they can safely disregard the poor.” Being in the United States—a nation some will claim is founded on “Christian values”—I wonder whether the poor truly have a preferred place here today?

### **Jesus’ Command: Serve the Poor**

The United States is one of the wealthiest nations in the world, and yet this year we’ve slashed billions of dollars in foreign aid, closing soup kitchens and health clinics across the globe. If the United States will not lead the world in eradicating hunger, who will? One study estimates that such cuts could lead to the loss of 14 million lives by 2030. We’ve become numb to the cry of these lives because we keep them at arm’s length, as if they’re none of our concern, a figure in a headline. But Pope Leo demonstrates that wealthier nations like ours have a responsibility to assist struggling nations with all their goods. We cannot remain “indifferent to countries suffering from hunger and extreme poverty,” because our mission is “a matter of hearing the cry of entire peoples, the poorest peoples of the earth.”

While the poor abroad are neglected, the poor at home fare no better. People struggling to find housing are often targets of new laws that criminalize sleeping on sidewalks or park benches, forcing them further into the peripheries. Migrants are increasingly viewed as threats to be hunted down and removed, rather than the “living presence of the Lord who, on the day of judgment, will say to those on his right: ‘I was a stranger and you welcomed me.’”

Our leaders seem unwilling to work together to respond to the needs of the poor. Political opponents are described as enemies of the people, and foreigners and the homeless are scapegoated as violent marauders invading our shores. The poor deserve leadership that is “capable of sincere and effective dialogue aimed at healing the deepest roots—and not simply the appearances—of the evils in our world.” Christians are called to serve everyone in need, even foreigners, strangers, or people we don’t yet understand, because “anyone in need, even an enemy, always deserves our assistance.”

In *Dilexi te*, Pope Leo poses an urgent challenge for Christians in the US and around the world: “Either we regain our moral and spiritual dignity or we fall into a cesspool.” Pope Leo calls Christians to turn their hearts toward the poor. We must remove the bitterness we have in our hearts for the marginalized, the migrant, the outcast, to make room for their suffering and struggles. We have to risk embracing the poor or we risk losing Jesus.

*Dilexi te* calls the Church to go back and reread the Gospel because there are a few things we have forgotten. We may not solve every systemic issue that oppresses the poor overnight, but just like Phil and his offering of a small sandwich, we can change history through small acts of charity. We can’t afford to wait any longer. Let’s resolve to live the Gospel Jesus has called us to, so that we can be a Church that the world needs, “a Church that sets no limits to love, that knows no enemies to fight but only men and women to love.”

**We are deeply grateful for the ongoing support we receive**

**from these organizations:**

**Dare to Care Food Bank**

**Epiphany Catholic Church**

**Flaget Alumni Association**

**The Gheens Foundation**

**The Mildred V. Horn Foundation**

**Kentucky Harvest**

**Knights of Columbus Bishop Spalding Council #2761**

**St. Albert the Great Catholic Church**

**St. Edward Catholic Church**

**St. Margaret Mary Catholic Community**

**The Morris Family Foundation**

## **SAVE THE DATE**



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**SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 2026 7:00-10:00**  
**HOLY FAMILY GYM 3938 POPLAR LEVEL ROAD**

## Memorial and Honorary Gifts (received through November 7)

### **In honor of all the faithful volunteers who serve at the Kitchen**

Annette Mattingly

### **In memory of Gary Bennett**

Margaret Bennett

### **In memory of Rita Book & Carl Goffinet**

David & Margaret Young

### **In memory of Bud Bouchard**

Joe & Lynn Edwards

### **In memory of Janice Dig Cabaysa**

Rachel Radwanski

### **In honor of Gary Calabrese**

Jeanna Varanese

### **In memory of John & Rosalene Cole**

John Cole

### **In memory of Ray Crider**

Marilyn Crider

### **In memory of Doris Lenore**

#### **Deskins**

Deborah Heuser

### **In memory of Joe Fallahay**

Joseph Doug Pohl

### **In honor of Jim Fitzgibbon's 85th birthday**

Andy & Angie Weas

### **In memory of Eleanor Girodo**

Judy Sullivan

### **In memory of Sean Patrick**

#### **Gosney**

Pat's Steak House

### **In memory of Ronnie Grantz**

Betty A. Nett

Judy Sullivan

### **In honor of Mary Greenwell**

Judith Miles

### **In memory of Dolores Hellmann**

George Brutcher

### **In honor of Vince Jacobi**

Nathaniel McDonald

### **In memory of Bonnie Jane Justice**

Donna Stewart

### **In memory of Dr. John M. Karibo**

Norma Karibo

Timothy & Theresa Poynter

### **In honor of Kitchen staff & volunteers**

Mr. Edward Reinert

### **In memory of John Koetter**

James Koerber

Janice Koetter

### **In memory of Rev. George M. Kollros**

Mary Ann Kollros

### **In memory of Joseph Lee & Anna Lil Laemmler**

Mr. & Mrs. James Laemmler

### **In memory of Ronald & Christopher**

#### **Lane**

Bonnie Lane

### **In memory of Jack McGuire**

Mary Ann McGuire

### **In memory of Thomas P. McShane III**

Don & Mary K. Korfhage

Tom & Karen McShane

### **In memory of Herb Meister**

Ginny & Larry Hunt

Cathy Meister

### **In honor of the Monday Crew**

Anonymous

### **In honor of Glen Murphy**

Mike & Rebecca Schardein

### **In memory of my husband**

Sara Boswell

### **In memory of Bob Niehoff**

Kathleen Wheatley

### **In honor of Our Lord Jesus Christ**

Barbara Seeders

### **In memory of our parents**

Mr. & Mrs. James Ofcacek

### **In memory of Paulie Pfister**

Sherry Burks, Cheryl Hayden, & Julie

Thoben

Terry Fremdling

### **In memory of Paulie Pfister (cont)**

Mary Hartlage

Shannon Mugavin & the Mugavin family

CJ Parrish

Mary Ann Rutledge

Mary Kathryn Vowels

### **In memory of Ken Porco**

Rosemary Drybrough

### **In honor of the Sean Rafferty family**

Anonymous

### **In honor of John Rowan**

Jacqueline Kruer

### **In memory of Frank Schmidt Sr.**

Mary Schmidt

### **In memory of Sheila Schnell**

Michelle Williams

### **In memory of Fred Schulten**

Mrs. Socorro Schulten

### **In memory of Tom Seay**

Mr. & Mrs. William Hunton

### **In memory of Sissy Spine**

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Spine

### **In memory of John R. Stowe**

Mrs. Lucy Stowe

### **In honor of St. Anthony**

Clara Bacallao

Dr. & Mrs. Phillip McIntosh Jr.

### **In memory of Nelle Willberding**

Anita Teets

### **In memory of Patrick J.**

#### **Wooldridge**

Robert and Janice Wooldridge

### **In memory of Loretta Wooley**

Gretchen Alton

James and Jo-Dee Jackson

### **In memory of Ernest "Skip"**

#### **Zimmerman**

Don & Mary Carol Kelly

Joseph Ledweg



# THE FRANCISCAN KITCHEN

748 South Preston Street  
Louisville, KY 40203

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
US POSTAGE  
JEFFERSONVILLE, IN  
PERMIT #92

*Dedicated to providing for the nourishment of God's family.*

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Mailing Address Line 1  
Mailing Address Line 2  
Mailing Address Line 3  
Mailing Address Line 4  
Mailing Address Line 5

## The Franciscan Kitchen Mission

**In the tradition of St. Francis, which recognizes we are all brothers and sisters, we are dedicated to providing for the nourishment of God's family.**

**We will maintain an environment of trust and fellowship to build mutual respect and beneficial relationships with our guests, co-workers, suppliers, and community.**

**These efforts will strengthen our organization and enable us to provide a much-needed service to our community.**

## Franciscan Kitchen Staff

Chuck Mattingly	Executive Director	Daniel Nicolas	Maintenance
Tony Perito	Advancement	Tim Dionne	Cook
Kelly Booker	Business Manager	Juan Jarrett	Warehouse

## Franciscan Kitchen Board

Lilli Burton	John Hauber	Fr. George Munjanattu
Tim Burton	Leo Hauber	Dr. Glen Murphy
Gary Calabrese	Mary Carol Kelly	Sean Rafferty
Bryan Fallon	Alice Kimble	Gary Roth
Joseph Ford	Annette Mattingly	Patrick Woods