SICM NEWS

Year 48, Number 1, Winter 2014

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2013 Annual Report

It has been a full and exciting year at SICM! We have been busy continuing programs, starting new initiatives, and collaborating in the community. Read ahead to learn more about what we've been up to during 2013!

SICM Community Service Awards



At the December Assembly, SICM awarded the Community Service Award to groups and individuals who are part of the SICM net-

work and who have gone "above and beyond" in areas of ministry.

Cheryl Gerstler has been involved with SICM for many years, and in many different ways. Her introduction to SICM was through the Summer Lunch program, where she volunteered many summers with Eastern Parkway UMC, bringing her children along to help out. When she was asked to be a delegate for EPUMC, she willingly stepped up and accepted the challenge. She enthusiastically met and exceeded the goals and responsibilities of a SICM delegate, diligently attending monthly meetings, relaying important information about SICM programs back to her congregation, and successfully engaging individuals in all activities related to SICM. Cheryl has made a noticeable impact in EPUMC'S focus on SICM as a target area of mission work, and three years ago she was asked to serve on SICM's Steering Committee. For her willingness to step in wherever and whenever she is needed, and for going above and beyond at SICM, Cheryl Gerstler was enthusiastically nominated!

Sue Hawkes-Teeter is a member of State Street Presbyterian and a faithful delegate from her congregation. While this itself is worthy, SICM recognized her for her long and dedicated tenure as the volunteer coordinator for the SICM Appliance Matching Program. Sue took this on from her home in Berne many years ago, at the request of Pat Obrecht, both while teaching and when retired. For many years, groups or even stores would not take a working appliance donation but there were people willing and able to pick them up for use. It varied between 6 and 12 a year; sometimes busy and sometimes not. Now with the Habitat Re Store (which does take appliances) there is little need for the service, so SICM is bringing this aspect to a close, although, in accepting the award, Sue said there was a person who had just called her looking for a washer and dryer! For all involved Rev. Phil thanked Sue for her dedicated service!

Don Wheeler, a volunteer in the Food Program, and Rev. Megan Stowe nominated Panera Bread in Glenville for going above and beyond in food donations. Don commented that the stores do not have to provide excess to those in need, but this store goes out of its way to make all the products available. Picking up later at night, Don and volunteers take many items - from simple bread to the carefully-packed fancy items—to the pantry. Manager Melvin Hathaway could not attend the December meeting but at a later Assembly indicated that he welcomes ways so that all the product can be used. Thank you, Panera Glenville!

Schenectady Inner City Ministry (SICM) celebrates the partnership of 54 member congregations "relating the resources of the congregations to the human needs of the city," which means ministries of social service, education, witness and social action. The SICM newsletter and more detailed financial and program information is available from SICM at 1055 Wendell Avenue, Schenectady, NY 12308 or (518) 374-2683. FAX: (518) 382-1871.

Email address: information@sicm.us.

Website address is: www.sicm.us.

SICM's finances are audited annually by an independent auditing firm.

Ministry Notes



Poverty

While SICM has obviously dealt with the effects of 'poverty' since our inception (this is our 48th year!) this past

vear we decided to focus more intentionally on it. Part of the impetus was a Times Union report (interestingly never carried in the sembly and now with Lent approaching Daily Gazette) that startled: 50.8% of the children in our city, according to the American Community Survey (part of the Census) lived in child poverty. We are in the bottom 15 of the country in terms of rates (rate, not absolute numbers). This information became available because now the ACS looks at cities of 65,000 and above. The Atlantic Cities series in one article looked at the unusual aspect that a number of small cities such as ours (although not discussing us particularly) have very high rates of child poverty.

The other impetus was the impending debate and discussion of the every 5 year (actually 7 in this case) passage of the Farm Bill that reauthorizes Food Stamps (now called SNAP) and the new release of A Place At the Table, a documentary about (APAT) Farm (and Food Security) Policy.

I saw the documentary when it came out and soon after got a call from Rev. Jeff

Kane of Messiah Lutheran who wanted to partner to show the film. The film raises hard questions. It is not your usual documentary but it is very well done (thanks Jeff Bridges!). But we bought a copy, encouraged others to see it, and interest widened. The numbers grew from a handful to a larger number; we showed it at the SICM Asmore congregations are planning a showing.

I believe it is a very good springboard to have discussions about farm and food insecurity (the government's new word for hunger) policy and the role of faith communities. Too many of our congregations, I discover, don't participate in Bread for the World and are not familiar with what it is (BFW is a Christian Citizens' movement that seeks to change public policy with and on behalf of hungry people; it has a proven track record that a small number of committed people of faith can make a great difference, check out www.bread.org). I was fortunate to get involved at the start of BFW back in the day, served as the first Connecticut coordinator, supported BFW through hunger walks, attended retreats, had a chance to meet Rev. Art Simon, Director Emeritus, etc.

Thanks to APAT (as we call it), it is providing a new way to talk about Hunger in America. It argues (as does the earlier work Sweet Charity, whose author is in the film) that even with the exponential growth of food pantries, more are hungry. Good food policies that existed previously really got at hunger. When I came in 1986 our pantry really helped those who 'fell between the cracks.' Now we have grown and grown. There is something good about that. We have a generous community. But from a policy perspective (and faith perspective) we need to revisit the conversation about charity and justice.

In the last newsletter we included the table showing that only 1 out of 24 of

SCHENECTADY INNER CITY MINISTRY

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The Assembly of SICM includes one clergy and lay delegate(s) from all member congregations: Alplaus United Methodist, Altamont Reformed, Bellevue Reformed, Bethel AME, Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha Parish, Burnt Hills United Methodist, Carman United Methodist, Christ Church Episcopal, Church of St. Adalbert, Duryee Memorial AME Zion, Eastern Parkway United Methodist, Emmanuel Baptist—Friedens UCC, Faith United Methodist, First Baptist, Sch'dy, First Baptist, Scotia, First Reformed, Sch'dy, First Reformed, Scotia, First United Methodist, Friendship Baptist, Good Shepherd Lutheran, Grace Lutheran, Grace Temple Church of God in Christ, Holy Name of Jesus PNC, Immaculate Conception, Immanuel Lutheran, Lynnwood Reformed, Messiah Lutheran, Mount Olivet Missionary Baptist, Niskayuna Reformed, Our Lady of Grace, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Our Lady Queen of Peace, Our Redeemer Lutheran, Refreshing Spring Church of God in Christ, Rotterdam United Methodist, St. Anthony's, St. George's Episcopal, St. John the Evangelist, St. Joseph's, Sch'dy, St. Joseph's, Scotia, St. Luke's, St. Paul the Apostle, St. Paul's Episcopal, St. Stephen's Episcopal, Scotia United Methodist, Society of Friends (Quakers), Stanford United Methodist, State Street Presbyterian, Tabernacle Baptist, Trinity Presbyterian, Union Presbyterian, Unitarian Universalist Society of Schenectady, Woodlawn Reformed, Zion Lutheran.

Poverty (cont'd from page 2)

the bags of food provided to people in our nation (in terms of food assistance) comes from us in the private sector. We can be glad for what we do. But we need to somehow spend an equal amount of time addressing the other 23 bags as well - advocating and addressing the food and hunger policies (oops, I used the 'h' word).

I urge you to check out Bread for the World (again, www.bread.org). If you are a member, great! Help spread the word! If you are not, check it out and join. And we are glad to lend you the film APAT (and now you can see it through Netflix), and glad even further to share with you what's going on with child poverty and what can be done about it.

Rev. Phillip N Grigsby

Community Service Awards (cont'd from page 1)

Each 1 Teach 1 is a 10-year-old+ program of a member congregation, Mt. Olivet Missionary Baptist Church. Some years ago church member Lillie Gantt (who unfortunately was out of town in December) became aware of the reading needs of our community's children and especially of the gaps that start over the summer. The church began the program slowly and now has built it up. A dozen church members plus the pastor, Rev. Horace Sanders, Jr. came forward to share the good news of the program. They continue to see this caring for children as an important ministry of the church. They plan to continue it in a different location this year since the church has moved. Non church members are welcome to volunteer. Rev. Phil in giving the award challenged other churches to either volunteer in the program or to begin their own!



In 2013, SICM established a Twitter handle! Follow us on it @SICM_NY And don't forget to follow and 'like' us on Facebook at Schenectady Inner City Ministry (SICM)



2013 Programs in Review



Schenectady Damien Center

2013 continued a year of transition for the SDC, located at 615 Nott Street. As the treatment for individuals living with HIV and AIDS has changed dramatically, SICM decided to transition the program to the Albany Damien Center (ADC). Tragically, while this was occurring, the ADC experienced a devastating fire in the late summer that rendered their main location unusable. While in some ways this made the possibility of a satellite site more possible, it obviously complicated their efforts. They have found temporary space at First Lutheran Church in Albany and are settling on a more permanent location.

In the meantime, the SDC site continues to get use from groups within the HIV service community. The AIDS Council has used the site for several groups, including a nutrition group and a women's' support group. Mohawk Opportunities also uses the site for various meetings.

SICM continues seeking funds and support for the satellite program. Supporters continue to be patient given the fire, and additional support is needed and welcome. We thank the Community Foundation, Union Presbyterian Church, CARES, Ellis, and others for recent pledges of support for the transition. SICM and TAUM jointly sponsored a fund raising dinner to help the ADC after the fire. For updates on ADC, please check their website; for information on the SDC, please contact Rev. Phil at the SICM office.

For any support coming to the SDC, please mail it directly to the SICM office, 1055 Wendell Avenue, Schenectady 12308. We only check the mail at the SDC site from time to time and the forwarding has expired.

CROP Walk 2013

The 32nd Annual Schenectady CROP Walk was held on Sunday, May 5, 2013. 500+ people walked the 5K route to raise funds for overseas and local hunger fighting, including SICM's Emergency Food Pantry. \$43,099 was raised as a result of the CROP Walk.



Emergency Food Pantry

Directed by Gail Van Valkenburgh, the food pantry continued to see a steady rise due to the economy. 2013 was our second full year under the once-per-month visit policy, made possible by an increase in our state HPNAP (Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program) funding. Total meals' worth of groceries given out in 2013 grew by 4% over 2012. Increases were seen in "Mass Distribution" held on the last Thursday of the month, where an average of 385 households per month were served, and in regular Pantry visits, with 52,033 individuals served (468,297 meals). Over 9500 milk cards, good for a gallon of Stewarts 1% milk, were provided to households with children under 18, and meals for 20,114 children were given out. We saw 1020 new households at the pantry. January 2013, with 44,568 meals' worth of groceries given out, nearly matched our all-time record month of August 2012 (45,000 meals' worth given out).

2013 was a year of change in what our guests received in their pantry bags. To serve more, we deleted some costly items and were able to offer yogurt and a larger portion of eggs and produce. With additional support from the Governor's Holiday Initiative, the pantry started providing more milk cards and other items. The Governor took this action in response to the federal reductions in Food Stamps starting November 1, 2013.

The former Sacred Heart/St. Columba's food pantry program transitioned to SICM in 2012. We provided monthly grocery delivery to approximately 25 people who are homebound; just under 300 deliveries were made in 2013. In June we said goodbye to Noralee Itchoak, a longtime staff member at the pantry, and we welcomed James Frasier to take over as Food Room/Volunteer Coordinator.



Our 6th annual Harvest for the Pantry fundraiser was held at First Reformed Scotia in November 2013. Chef Nicky and crew once again did an outstanding job, and a total of over \$20,000 was raised for the Pantry.

As part of SICM's "Days of Service," several individuals and congregations collected goodies for Easter/Spring treat bags. As in previous years, over 200 children at the Food Pantry reaped the benefits, receiving the treat bags in the days leading up to Easter.

The annual Post Office Drive in May provided over 80,000 pounds of food for our local food pantries, of which SICM received 31,000 pounds. Our "back door" food donations from individuals, congregations, and others totaled 142,016 pounds.

Safe Parks & Edible Playgrounds

Although the grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for this project ended, SICM continued some of the emphases as resources permit. In partnership with Cornell Cooperative Extension, SICM continued the "edible playgrounds" emphasis in Hillhurst and Steinmetz Parks. SICM's contract with Cornell also supported the Roots and Wisdom emphases at the Fehr Avenue site. Debbie Forester left Cornell/Roots and Wisdom but they were able to continue garden projects. They involved elementary age classes in both parks. The Steinmetz park effort was much more limited due to the construction in the park (SICM had to suspend the summer lunch program there as well). SICM dropped the Wallingford site due to vandalism in the park and distance from the closest school. SICM at year end was reviewing recommendations on ways to re-direct the garden emphasis in the parks.

Days of Service 2013

On two Saturdays during the spring of 2013, volunteers came together for the opportunity to give back to the community. On Saturday, March 9, volunteers gathered at Faith United Meth-

odist Church to assement the Emergency Food Form local congregation lege and Siena College

odist Church to assemble over 200 Easter/Spring bags that were handed out at the Emergency Food Pantry. On Saturday, April 13, we had over 75 volunteers from local congregations, the community, and student groups from Union Col-

lege and Siena College who gave of their time to help beautify some of Schenectady's parks, many of which are utilized for SICM's Summer Lunch program.

Summer Lunch Program

Coordinated by Allison Williams, SICM's Summer Lunch Program grew dramatically in 2013. The major addition was a pilot Summer Lunch Wagon through support of the United Way of the Greater Capital Region. The Wagon operated with six city stops; the first week it served



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100 daily and at the end went as high as 350! We utilized a rented small school bus, and with George Warner and others on board provided daily lunch. It turned out to be the first one upstate and is the pilot for potential expansion in 2014 with a second wagon. The first time around we could only offer cold meals with the wagon. United Way also partnered, with Hunger Solutions, to help create greater awareness of the program and participated in a Kick Off event with their CEO in Schenectady.

SICM provided over 53,500 lunches at 23 sites. This was up 54% from 34,600 in 2012. We also expanded the number of sites to provide more coverage. The United Way grant enabled us to hire more site coordinators who often partnered with interns and many dedicated volunteers to run sites. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides the funding for meals, operating through the NYS Department of Education. The USDA funds cover the meals but only a portion of the administration and other costs needed to run a larger program. SICM is the only summer lunch vendor in Schenectady County. The sites continued to be in public parks, on church lawns, in congregations, and in municipal housing community rooms.

Another addition in 2013 was the restoration of Collins Park in Scotia as a site thanks to Campus Kitchens at Union College, a student-led group. They partnered with the churches in Scotia and Glenville to raise additional support and lunches were provided. The park itself does not qualify as an open USDA site, but SICM is exploring ways for this to continue in 2014.

Another change in the program was the selection of a new food service vendor though a competitive bidding process. Whitson's was selected; they also provide the school meals in the city district. We worked with them to offer some 'shelf-able' meals on one day which provided for both choice and cost saving.

SICM thanked the volunteers with an ice cream social in August. Allison, Rev. Stacey, and Rev. Phil expressed our appreciation for many who took time to help our community's children. The program concluded at the end of August, with staff and volunteers reviewing the program and recommendations for 2014.

Summer Interns

Janet Mattis coordinated 16 high school and college students who performed a variety of duties at Summer Lunch, Emergency Food Pantry and Home Furnishings. We are grateful to the sponsoring congregations and individuals who financially supported the interns: Austin & Marti Spang, First Reformed Church of Schenectady, Lynnwood Reformed, Niskayuna Reformed, Bellevue Reformed, St. George's Episcopal, Trinity Presbyterian, Union Presbyterian, and St. Kateri Tekakwitha. The interns were high school students from Guilderland, Mohanasen, Mekeel Christian Academy, Niskayuna, Schenectady and Scotia-Glenville



SICM Interns Corey Chaires, Cheyenne Clarke

Schools as well as college students from Bryant & Stratton, Loyola University, SUNY Albany, Brockport and Geneseo, Wells College, and the University of Vermont. We are equally grateful to the interns for all their hard work, dedication and incredible flexibility.



SICM Interns, Summer 2013-Back row, L to R: Chris Murphy, Devon Dare, Peter Krauss, Matthew Kellish, Anna Winters, Eileen Ploetz, Rebecca Rose, Katherine Quinn Front row, L to R: Emily Cogswell, Olivia Golden, Emily Massey, Elizabeth Gallagher, Anna Mattis

Thank you, interns!

Development

SICM is blessed with continued volunteer and financial support from many individuals, congregations, religious organizations, businesses and foundations. We received support from the Consolidated Federal Campaign, Contributor's Choice of United Way and State Employees Federated Appeal. The continuing support from the GE More Gifts More Givers Program is very encouraging.

Thank you to congregations that hosted SICM summer lunch sites: Faith United Methodist, Friendship Baptist (Friendship House), Mt. Olivet Missionary Baptist and Trinity Lutheran (Central State Street Ecumenical Cluster), New Consecration Temple, Christ Centered Unity Missionary Baptist, State Street Presbyterian, Faith Deliverance Tabernacle, and New Day Christian Empowerment Center. We also appreciate the City of Schenectady for their support for Summer Lunch at 5 parks (Central, Hillhurst, Jerry Burrell, Quackenbush and Wallingford) and the Community Rooms at Steinmetz and Yates Village provided by the Schenectady Municipal Housing Authority and community partners: Hamilton Hill Arts Center, miSci (Schenectady Museum), and Schenectady Public Library. A grant from the United Way of the Greater Capital Region supported our first-ever mobile Summer Lunch site, which was very successful.

SICM received support from:

AAA Northway

Albany Presbytery

Ancient Order of Hibernians

Argo Turboserve Corp.

ARMA International, LLC

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Brown School

Brown Transportation

Capital Area Baptist Association

Chamber of Schenectady County

Church Women United

Church World Service

Coburg Village Residents

Country Knolls Nursery School

Culligan of Scotia

Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA)

Flying Geese Fabrics

GE Athletic Association

GE Woman's Club

Hudson Mohawk Association of United Church of Christ

Hudson Mohawk Conference of the Evangelical Church in

America (ELCA)

Hummingbird Home Association

I.A.T.S.E. Local #14

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Red-Cap Sales, Inc.

Reformed Church World Service

Robert E. Van Vranken and Lori Liebers

Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany through CREO

(Capital Region Ecumenical Organizations)

Schenectady Federation of Teachers

Schenectady Ole Timers Baseball Club

Senior Sewers of Schenectady

Sow's Ear Studio and Gallery

TA Predel & Co. Inc.

The Whitney Club, Inc.

Upstate NY Conference, United Methodist Church

SICM received grants from:

BJ's Charitable Foundation

Broadway Cares/Equity Action Guild

William Gundry Broughton Charitable Foundation

Edward D. Cammarota Foundation

City of Schenectady's Consolidated Plan

Community AIDS Partnership of the Capital Region

Concerned for the Hungry

Emergency Food and Shelter Board through United Way

Feinstein Challenge

Macerich Company/Rotterdam Square Mall

Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger

NYS Department of Education (Summer Food Service)

NYS Dept. of Health, Hunger Prevention Nutrition

Assistance Program

Rotary Clubs, Schenectady

Schenectady County Strategic Alliance for Health

SEFCU

Stewarts' Shops

United Way of the Greater Capital Region

WGY Christmas Wish Campaign

Wright Family Foundation





Memorial and Honorary Gifts (UPDATE)



In Honor Of

Alma Blohm's Birthday Andy Lustofin's 70th Birthday Bart & Marilyn Bisgrove

Ben & Martin Veresko's Bar Mitzvah

Benjamin Veresko Beth Pudney Bethel AME Church

Bob VanVranken

Bruce Toothaker's Birthday Carrie Marocco's 100th Birthday

Crvs Hamelink

David & Pilar Seacord

David & Teresa Leon and Family

Dr. Geradus Jameson

Ed Grinter Elaine M. Bair

Elaine Bair & SICM Volunteers **Emmanuel Friedens Church Staff**

Father Bob Longobucco Gail VanValkenburgh Gary & Noreen Bonk Cheryl Gerstler

George & Paula Griffin Iames W. Bendall Jim & Nancy Bedard

Joseph F. Mocker Jr & John F Mocker

Kay Grosch Kelly de la Rocha Kevin S. Mednick Larry N. Lewis Linda & John Linton Marilyn Wilson Krug Marsha Mortimore Martin Veresko

Marty Goodman's 75th Birthday Pastor & Mrs. William Clasen

Pat & Bob Obrecht Paul Kehoe's Birthday

Ralph Lasselle's 80th Birthday

Rev. Dr. Dennis Meyer's

40th Anniversay of Ordination

Rev. William Kark's 85th Birthday

Sister Cynthia Ann Herman

Sister Rosemary

Thad & Sylvia Raushi's 50th Anniversary

The Knights of St. John

The Marriage of Peter Settle and Francoise Thomas

Thomas & Lorraine Shickle

Timothy Cole Trish Cassady William & Dot Dever's 50th Anniversary

In Memory Of

Al Lowe

Albert J Madonna

Ann & Herb Speanburg Anna & Dale Frankish

Anne S. Harrington Audrey VanAlstine

Betty Batcher from Stanford UMC & Joy Fellowship

Betty Jane Betty Stinzianni

Earlene "Stormy" Shayne

Charles Ehrcke

Courtney A. Erickson & Patricia M. Fall

Courtney Erickson David Randles Della M. Rilev

Dimitrios "Jimmy" Ktenas

Don Patneaude Donna Pawlaski Dorothy Harlow Dorothy Smith Edward Blohm Elaine Lefkowitz Elma Mele **Everett Stewart** F. William Joynt

Floyd and Dorothea Baker

Francis F. Long Fred Morlock

Ginger (Antoinette) Wilson

Gordon Guenther Harold Harlow Helen Mitchell Baum Helen Ringlee Hilda Winbauer Ian "Corky" Boehm Sr James B. Montgomery

Jeannie Davies John Clancy John Mocker

Joseph & Angelina Friello

Joseph Early Joseph Mangano Justin De Paula Lawrence P. Van Ellen Lillian E. Van Etten Rev. Lynn Joosten Mary Salvatore

Mary Steven Mr & Mrs Scott Norma Burns

Norman W. Cover Pauline (Polly) Moran

Peter Giacchetta Peter Morra

Richard Mahoney Robert Grot

Russ Igoe

Ruth & Clarence Browne Sam & Margaret Guarnier

Sam Guarnier Sean Valero Shirley Willis Sonia Lintner Steven Munson

The parents of Arthur &

Annie Salvatore

Thomas Robb Timothy L Magila Tom Rourke Wallace J. Riley William Sievert Wilma Corcoran

Audrey VanAlstine



Many thanks to all for your kind acts of generosity. SICM appreciates all your donations! To make a donation online, please visit our website at www.sicm.us and click on "Supporting SICM" in the sidebar.



Schenectady Inner City Ministry

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SAVE THE DATES:

Saturdays, April 5 & 26 Days of Service Sunday, May 4 CROP Walk Friday, May 9 SICM Celebrates Schenectady Thursday, May 15 CDPHP Workforce Challenge

The Last Word, by Rev. Stacey Midge, President, SICM Steering Committee

With Nelson Mandela's recent passing, I've been reflecting on his life and his constant pursuit for justice - not eye-for-an-eye retributive justice, but a justice that seeks restoration, a justice in which everyone has the opportunity to thrive. We may know him primarily for his struggle to end apartheid, but he understood institutionalized racism, discrimination, and poverty to be intertwined threads of the wider problem of injustice. He saw these injustices as human-caused conditions, that could and should be eradicated by human action.



On July 1, 2005, Mandela said, "Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice." Frankly, I find this challenging. Charity, you see, is easier. Charity just means that I have something, and I give it to someone who needs it. Justice is more complicated; it involves taking a longer view toward empowering people, so that all might thrive. Churches, and organizations like SICM, are good at charity. We are good at seeing concrete, immediate needs and finding ways to meet them - and thank God that we are! Together, we have served over 8 million meals to households in need over the last forty years through the Emergency Food Pantry, and given out 500,000 lunches to hungry children in our Summer Lunch Program.

As we look forward, however, we have an opportunity to attend not just to charity but also to justice. The Steering Committee and Assembly have focused our attention this year on the overarching causes, effects, and potential solutions of poverty and hunger. As we learn more about the underlying issues, we also discern how we might increase our advocacy efforts in the future. I'd like to invite you, the members and friends of SICM, to be in prayer with and for us during this time, and also to attend one of our upcoming assembly meetings and hear in person what is happening in our community and within SICM. I look forward to seeing you and working together with you in the months to come.

Grace and peace,

Rev. Stacey Midge