

St. Benedict's Episcopal Church and MUST Ministries

Team Up to Help Their Neighbors in Need



SMYRNA, GA September 8, 2009 St. Benedict's Episcopal Church and MUST Ministries have partnered to provide extended service hours for the working poor in the Smyrna area . On the last Wednesday Night of every month, members of St. Benedict's Episcopal Church staff MUST Smyrna's food and clothing pantries.

"The end of the month can be a particularly difficult time for single parents and those with big families. By helping with evening staffing of the MUST Smyrna food pantry and clothing closet, we are literally helping people make ends meet during these difficult economic times," states John Gotham, one of the outreach leaders for St. Benedict's Episcopal Church.

Overall, MUST Ministries is seeing a dramatic increase in demand for services. Unemployment and underemployment, meaning people not being able to find full-time jobs, are significant problems for many in Cobb County and other areas MUST serves. Andrew Peabody, Program Director at MUST says, *"From July 2007-June 2008, MUST Ministries served more than 24,000 neighbors in need. Staring into the face of a sharp economic downturn, MUST began planning in the fall of 2008 for the numbers of people we expected would come to us seeking emergency food and clothing in the coming year. While we are still catching up on some data entry, as of one week ago we had accounted for more than 29,239 individual people served this fiscal year –a 6000 person increase over last year. This remarkable capacity to respond to those in crisis in our community absolutely, unequivocally could not have been produced were it not for the hearts and hands of people like the people of St. Benedict's."*

St. Benedict's joins Northstar Church in Acworth as one of two Cobb County congregations jumping in to provide much needed manpower to expand service hours at MUST Ministries Smyrna. MUST Smyrna's normal operating hours are from 10 am to 2 pm, Monday through Friday, but they know there are a number of people in the community who could benefit from having access to services during the evening. By reaching out to local congregations for help, MUST Smyrna has found an innovative way of providing expanded services without dramatic increases in operational costs.

St. Benedict's Vicar, the Rev. Lang Lowrey states, "Since our inception, we have worked to be a church that is very active in the community. Our relationship with MUST Ministries and specifically MUST Smyrna, gives our members significant and meaningful opportunities to exercise their faith in practical ways that not only helps others in need but also feeds them on their spiritual journey."

St. Benedict's will staff the MUST Smyrna food and clothing pantry on September 30, 2009 and October 28, 2009 from 6-8 PM.

About St. Benedict's Episcopal Church: St. Benedict's Episcopal Church of Smyrna/Vinings is a parish in the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta. Our mission is to come together as a community to grow in faith and share Christ's love with an ever-changing world. As a reflection of our namesake, St. Benedict, we are founded on a belief in the traditional liturgy of the church coupled with the need to develop contemporary relationships that recognize the real-world challenges facing today's faithful. St. Benedict's congregation worships at Campbell Middle School, 3295 Atlanta Road, Smyrna, GA 30080 until the beginning of November at which point we will move into our new sanctuary at 2160 Cooper Lake Road, Smyrna, GA 30080. On the web at <http://www.mysaintb.org>