

Branches on the Vine

SEPTEMBER 13 - 19, 2025



A case of canned food is carried in by volunteers of Mother Teresa Food Pantry which operates from St. Ann Church in Bristol.
PHOTO BY KAREN A. AVITABILE

GUIDED BY ST. TERESA'S EXAMPLE, FOOD PANTRY NOURISHES BRISTOL COMMUNITY

For more than 25 years, parishioners of St. Francis de Sales Parish in Bristol have been honoring St. Teresa of Calcutta by helping to combat food insecurity in their town.

The parish has been running its own Mother Teresa Food Pantry for the saint who dedicated her life to providing food, shelter and medical care to people who needed it the most around the world.

Canonized in 2016 by Pope Francis, St. Teresa received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 for her perseverance to alleviating poverty and hardship. The anniversary of her death, on Sept. 5, is observed as her feast day.

Food pantry volunteers from St. Francis de Sales parish churches of St. Ann and St. Anthony of Padua organize collections of non-perishable food items and then fill grocery bags with them.

Spearheaded by Jacqueline Taber, Mother Teresa Food Pantry is open on Tuesdays and Thursday mornings at St. Ann Church for collection pickups.

"I enjoy helping people," says Taber, who has been involved with the food pantry for close to 20 years with her husband, Philip. "You see the smiles on people's faces when you give them the food."

Once a month, Bristol residents who need assistance are able to pick up a grocery bag – or two bags for a family – at St. Ann Church. No questions are asked. Clients range from young individuals to older adults, along with numerous families. During the holiday seasons, the food pantry volunteers see an increase in need; so, they also collect and distribute turkeys and hams donated by the parish.

Canned food items can be dropped off at the entrances of St. Ann and St. Anthony of Padua churches before weekend Masses. During bingo fundraisers on Thursday evenings in St. Ann Church Hall, donations are also accepted.

Parishioners of nearby St. Matthew & St. Gregory the Great Parish, with churches in Bristol and Forestville, also collect canned goods in their churches and drop them off at St. Ann Church.

"I feel this is beneficial for those people who need a little support," says Jackie Samele, a food pantry volunteer for 10 years. "Back then, the food pantry needed volunteers and I stepped up."



Volunteers of Mother Teresa Food Pantry look for the dates of canned food donations.
PHOTO BY KAREN A. AVITABILE

The Mother Teresa Food Pantry team is made up of about a dozen volunteers. Like Taber, who retired and was looking for something extra to keep her busy, most of the volunteers are retirees who want to remain active, stay socially connected and make a difference in their own community. They say working with the clients enhances their own lives.

"It brings me happiness to see their joy," says five-year volunteer Marthe Trudel. "I try to make someone else happy."

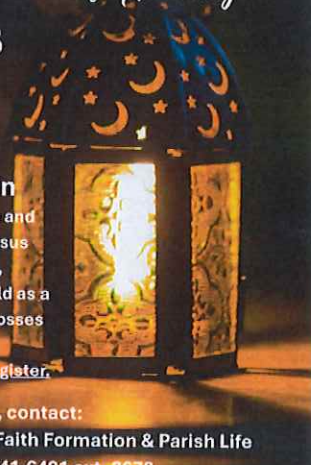
For Sylvia Caron, giving to others has made her more thankful. "It gives you such a warm feeling to see their eyes light up and listen to them," she says. "It's a great feeling to do something for them. I love it."

Long-time volunteer Claudine Tanguay describes her volunteer work as "helping others while having fun at the same time."

- Story by Karen A. Avitabile



Upcoming Events



Seen

A Mass of Remembrance and Healing

Friday, October 17, 2025
6:00 p.m.

Saint Francis Church
1755 Stanley Street, New Britain

All are welcome to attend this Mass of Remembrance and experience the profound peace, love and mercy of Jesus Christ. A special invitation is extended to parents, grandparents and siblings who grieve the death of a child as a result of a miscarriage, still birth or infant loss. These losses may be recent or extend over many years.

A reception to follow the Mass. [Please use this link to register.](#)

If you have any questions, contact:
Valerie St. Jean, Associate Director of Adult Faith Formation & Parish Life
Valerie.StJean@aohct.org - 860-541-6491 ext. 2678

Please Join Us at the

Catholic Academy
of
Waterbury

4th Annual Awards Dinner & Fundraiser

Thursday, October 9, 2025
6:00 p.m.

All dinner tickets must be purchased no later than October 7. There are no tickets at the door.

La Bella Vista
380 Farmwood Road
Waterbury

To inquire about tickets, please call
Waleska in the school office at
203.756.5313



09/28 SUNDAY 3PM

A CLASSICAL CONCERT WITH CORBIN BEISNER

Our Lady of Knock Parish -
St. Mary Star of the Sea Church,
145 Main St, Unionville

Come enjoy classical music performed by award-winning, renowned concert pianist Corbin Beisner! For over two decades, Corbin has performed in numerous venues throughout the United States and Europe, and has received several accolades and awards. He holds degrees in piano performance from the Hartt School of Music and the prestigious Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest, Hungary.

There is no charge for this concert and all are invited. Attendees will have the opportunity to make a free-will offering with proceeds benefiting the Our Lady of Knock Parish & St. Patrick Church Collinsville Haiti Ministry's programs at St. Thérèse School in Lilavois, Haiti.

Refreshments will be served after the concert! For more information about the Haiti Ministry and this event, visit ourladyofknock.org/haiti.

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