

**CENTRETOWN CHURCHES SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE (CCSAC)**  
**507 Bank Street, Ottawa, ON K2P 1Z5**  
[www.centretownchurches.org](http://www.centretownchurches.org)



**NEWSLETTER**

*February 2018*

**WALK-A-THON – WALK FOR THE FOOD CENTRE RETURNS**

CCSAC's second Walk-a-thon was a great success! Over 200 people braved a rainy Sunday afternoon on October 15 to participate in this year's walk to promote awareness of the need for food security for many in central Ottawa and to raise funds for the Centretown Emergency Food Centre. Over 450 people made financial contributions totaling nearly \$20,000.

Beginning and finishing at City Hall, participants had a choice of two walks: a longer one along the Rideau Canal or a shorter one up to Parliament Hill. Despite a fine rain, there was a festive air to the event as a local cappella group, The Glebelles, entertained the crowd during the pre-walk registration, and, as piper, Ross Davidson, led the walkers out of City Hall.

Elizabeth Kent, the walk organizer said, "the walk is an important way to remind people that there are many in this city for whom access to adequate and nourishing food in an ongoing challenge. Walks like this can make a difference".

CCSAC wishes to thank everyone who participated in the walk, sponsored a walker, or generously made a donation. With such a fine outpouring of support from the member churches and the community at large for a second year, Walk for the Centre organizers are hoping to make this an annual fundraiser for such a worthy cause.

John Pedersen, Editor

**NEWS FROM CENTRETOWN EMERGENCY FOOD CENTRE (CEFC)**

In 2017 the Centretown Emergency Food Centre provided a monthly grocery program for a total of 9,406 needy people of all backgrounds, race and religion who live in our large catchment area.

Since we don't have space for other programs, we try to enhance our support by partnering with other groups and through referrals, rather than duplicating services that exist elsewhere.

One example of this is that at Christmas this year, forty-eight of our client families received a Christmas Hamper from Centretown United Church, while donations of ham, turkey and gift cards from the Ottawa Food Bank were distributed to almost every client who was not eligible for a Christmas hamper.

Among those who received extra help was a father with 3 children, who was referred to the Centre by one of our member churches on December 22 because he had exhausted his small savings and the food in his fridge while waiting for his first unemployment insurance cheque. We were the only food bank still open. We quickly put together a regular monthly order plus a generous hamper with a turkey and all the trimmings, including some small gifts, so he could celebrate Christmas with his children.

As we review 2017, we are very grateful for the strong and generous support of our major donors, our member churches, our parent organization, the Centretown Churches Social Action Committee (CCSAC), the City of Ottawa and the Ottawa Food Bank. During the year, we also benefited from donations from many individuals, from food drives by all local schools and at

several local retail outlets, and from Christmas fundraising events by the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa at St. Giles Presbyterian Church, Thirteen Strings and Knox Presbyterian Church.

In 2018, the Food Centre celebrates its fortieth year of operation. The year coincides with the introduction of Ontario's new minimum wage laws. Naturally, we hope that the new wage levels will improve the financial stability for the working poor, in particular our clients who have jobs. But we worry that cost-saving measures will mean many workers will lose their positions, or get fewer hours, and that in turn, we will see a marked increase in the need for our services in Centretown.

**PS: Special Request - if you are applying to Loblaw ([loblawcard.ca](http://loblawcard.ca)) for a \$25 gift card to compensate for overpaying for bread at their stores, please consider donating your card to the Food Centre.**

Kerry Kaiser, Coordinator

## **CCSAC ECUMENICAL PRAYER BREAKFAST NOVEMBER 3, 2017**

My soul waits for the Lord  
more than watchmen for the morning,  
more than watchmen for the morning.

These words from Psalm 130 set the tone for the CCSAC Ecumenical Prayer Breakfast held on November 5, 2017 at Canadian Martyrs Catholic Church. The idea for the Ecumenical Prayer Breakfast was born out of CCSAC's mission statement: "to unite Christians of all denominations through joint participation in social projects and prayer."

While devoting much time and energy throughout the year mobilizing its twenty-three member churches to support the Centretown Emergency Food Centre and to campaign for stronger social justice issues, CCSAC has also hosted and participated in many ecumenical services over its fifty-year history. This year we sought a new

opportunity to mobilize church members to unite in prayer.

Invitations to a prayer breakfast were therefore targeted at clergy and leadership of our member churches. As a result, a group of twenty-six, representing fifteen churches from six denominations, gathered and filled the cozy space set up in the fellowship hall at Canadian Martyrs.

The ecumenical spirit of the event rang true during the lively fellowship that accompanied the light breakfast. The group then settled in to hear a short homily from Fr. Jim Fiori, priest at Canadian Martyrs. Fr. Jim offered words of encouragement and challenge to focus on the things that unite us as people of faith and co-labourers in Christ. A time of reflective prayer followed, structured around a guided cycle of prepared prayers, silence, and spontaneous prayers. The central themes of praying for our churches, our neighbours, the powerless, and the powerful were introduced by prayers prepared by several CCSAC members, and a significant amount of time was dedicated to silent prayer and meditation, waiting for the Lord as watchmen wait for the morning. The event concluded with a sung benediction, voices raised together in blessing.

I would like to thank Fr. Jim Fiori and Jane Staples at Canadian Martyrs for their incredible hospitality and support of this event, all the CCSAC members who generously prepared food and prayers, and especially Maureen Killoran for her invaluable help to me in envisioning and organizing this Ecumenical Prayer Breakfast. To God be the glory!

Erin Felak, St. Peter & St. Paul's

## **FOOD CENTRE HOURS**

Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays & Fridays: 12 pm to 2:00 pm

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Wednesday, April 25, 7:00 pm:** Annual General Meeting, St. Peter's Lutheran Church, 400 Sparks Street.