



**CENTRETOWN CHURCHES
SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE**

*Uniting Christians of all denominations through
joint participation in social projects and prayer*

Annual Report of the Chair of CCSAC for 2018

The Centretown Churches Social Action Committee (CCSAC)'s membership includes 23 churches in the central part of Ottawa. Monthly meetings offer member churches an opportunity to share information and undertake joint activities. CCSAC also ensures the common voice of central Ottawa churches is heard on various social justice or poverty-related issues. Its top priority, however, is our collective support for the Centretown Emergency Food Centre and the important work it does in serving some of our most disadvantaged neighbours.

This year member churches donated \$17.8 thousand to CCSAC, most of which was used to support the Food Centre. Approximately \$44 thousand was also donated directly to the Food Centre by various member congregations and their parishioners. This reflects a decline in overall financial assistance from member churches, many of which support other valued ministries or face financial challenges of their own. While the Food Centre continues to receive a grant from the City of Ottawa and regular grocery deliveries from the Ottawa Food Bank, more resources are always needed. With this in mind, CCSAC is exploring diverse ways to ensure the ministry of the Emergency Food Centre can be supported.

Accordingly, CCSAC organized its third annual "Walk for the Centre" on behalf of the Food Centre. This year's walk brought out nearly 200 people including many teams from member churches, and raised \$21,600. CCSAC's intention was also to raise awareness of the need for food security for many in central Ottawa, and so we were very pleased with the strong turnout, and the enthusiasm of the walkers. Plans are already underway to undertake another walk in 2019, with City Hall again as the focal point. Next year's walk takes place October 6th.

CCSAC actively supports two initiatives that reflect our commitment to social justice and poverty reduction: Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) and the Multifaith Housing Initiative. Several member churches again participated in CPJ's nation-wide campaign to mark the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

Once more, CCSAC wrote a letter supporting the findings of the Centretown and Somerset West Community Health Centres' follow-up report on rooming houses, which emphasized the need to improve the quality of existing accommodation, as well as more affordable housing, in central Ottawa. We see the impact of inadequate housing for many of the clients of the Centretown Emergency Food Centre, and this is one issue where the collective voice of a body such as CCSAC may be helpful.

The CCSAC website (www.centretownchurches.org) continues to be a mechanism for promoting our work and reaching out to member churches and citizens. It offers lists of the food and fellowship services available at member churches, in the hope of reaching more people in need. With support from CPJ, the CCSAC newsletter was modernized this year, introducing a new design and colour printing. We are confident the new version will reach more readers and attract more support.



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Throughout the year, CCSAC representatives organize meetings or services designed to bring our community together. This year, we continued a new concept, an Ecumenical Prayer Breakfast for CCSAC clergy and representatives, which was hosted by Rev. Gregor Snedden at St. Matthews Anglican Church. It had as its theme “isolation and loneliness in today’s world”. The service was very well-received, and, we felt, offered a somewhat more spiritual focus after the busy months organizing the walkathon. In addition, the Annual General Meeting, was held in April at St. Peter’s Evangelical Lutheran Church with Rev. Elena Salonen providing the opening prayer. In the Spring, CCSAC hosted a dinner to recognize the 90-plus volunteers who work at the Centretown Emergency Food Centre, and in December co-hosted, with the Food Centre’s Management Board, an Advent Service and lunch, both held at Centretown United Church. Fr. Tim Coonen of Canadian Martyrs Catholic Church gave the homily at this year’s Advent Service

On behalf of our representatives, may I thank our member churches and clergy for their support and encouragement throughout the year. In addition, as the current chair, I would like to thank representatives of CCSAC, the Food Centre Management Board and staff, and all volunteers for their continued commitment to those most in need in our community. I would also like to thank Elizabeth Kent, our vice-chair and leader of the walkathon committee, Anne Whitehurst and Mary Mussell, our co-secretaries, Joe Courtright, our treasurer, Erin Felak, our website advisor, and John Pedersen our newsletter editor.

This year’s Annual General Meeting will be held April 3, 2019 at Blessed Sacrament Church in the Glebe and all are welcome!

Kristine Burr, Chair, Centretown Churches Social Action Committee

January 23, 2019