



February 2023

A belated Happy New Year to you all and thank you for your support and kind donations during 2022. Overall we think it was the year of getting our act back together again after the difficulties of COVID during 2020 and 2021. There are of course very difficult issues to be faced during 2023 especially amongst those who may be less fortunate than ourselves and the need for our services is as great as ever.

So what did we achieve in 2022?

1. Monthly afternoon teas recommenced in September. We see this as a parish event for all and not just those in need in some way. Numbers have grown to about 40 each month and, in addition to tea/coffee and some delicious cakes, entertainment was provided with a Juke Box Jury/Karaoke, sing along songs from Libby Service, Old Time Music Hall for Remembrance Day, and a Christmas Quiz, when we were also entertained by the Mini Vinnies and some of the teachers with Christmas songs & carols. In addition we were very pleased to provide a Christmas lunch of turkey or vegetable curry, trifle and mince pies to 60 people which was a great success, and we hope to repeat this on a quarterly basis.
2. We continued with our daily runs to Costco delivering food to several hostels and foodbanks primarily around central and inner Birmingham. Our foodbank team have also continued to do a fantastic job collecting food at a number of drop off points around the parish, as well as the food left in the narthex, and delivering primarily to Bethany Foodbank. Many thanks to the team and all of you who have continued to contribute. Pastor Kevin at Bethany continues to work all hours supported by his team of volunteers and it is a fantastic operation feeding over 1,000 families a month. His latest problem however is that, whilst his landlords continue to provide the premises rent free they can no longer cover their electricity costs, and in December they were faced with their first monthly bill of £3000! If you have any ideas as to how support can be found for this then please let us know.
3. To help with the above we were very pleased to be adopted by Sainsburys in Dorridge for receipt of all of their donated food and we are currently collecting about 6-8 trolleys of food a month from them. In addition we were asked if we would like to conduct a monetary collection for the foodbank, just before Christmas, which we did and raised £370 which was given to Bethany.
4. We had a fantastic response to our Christmas Giving Tree again and 140 presents were taken to St Vincents School and Father Solomon in Nechells. This is an area where there are many in need and they continue to very much appreciate our support. Thank you to all who contributed. We were also able to provide 2 £50 Tesco vouchers to Father Solomon to distribute to deserving families.
5. In December we also hosted the SVP Warwick District meeting which was attended by members from conferences around the district and was preceded by mass given by Father John and followed up by a brief social.
6. Business as usual continued with visits to the elderly and sick, transport as required and support for our overseas SVP conferences in India, Rumania and Sudan to whom we send £700 p.a.
7. We held our annual Mass for the sick which was appreciated by those who attended.
8. The Mini Vinnies at school continued to grow and thrive and undertook a number of charitable initiatives including helping at our afternoon teas and supporting the Bethany Foodbank



So what about 2023?

1. We will continue with all of our current activities and look forward to receiving your support. We do however feel that there may be more people in the parish who would benefit from our support, perhaps with a regular visit or help in some other way. Please keep us in mind and either speak to one of us or email svpstgt@btinternet.com
2. We have identified some initial support that we can possibly give to St Chads Sanctuary, a place of welcome for Asylum Seekers and Refugees in the centre of Birmingham (by the cathedral), providing food and making people welcome, giving practical support with English classes and signposting. We deliver fresh food from Costco on a weekly basis. Unfortunately their existing freezer has broken which reduces the amount of perishable food that they are able to store so we have agreed to provide them with a new freezer. If you have any ideas regarding how the SVP can help those in need please let us know
3. As part of our relationship with Sainsburys, the store in Dorridge have nominated St George & St Teresa church for a grant of £500 to support a food related charity. After some consideration we have submitted our application to help Manningford Hall, a new Support Centre run by the St Vincent de Paul Society. This exciting new venture was officially opened on Thursday 1 December by His Grace Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham, and Elizabeth Palmer, SVP Chief Executive.

The centre is based at Manningford Hall, Druids Heath, and will support those in need in the area, initially being open for three days a week. From Friday 2 December it opened as a 'warm place' for this winter, offering a warm refuge where people can enjoy a cuppa and a light lunch if they are unable to heat their own house or flat. It will also offer a foodbank, though this may be limited in scope at first. In time the aim is to offer a senior citizens lunch; Stay & Play (mothers & toddlers); advice and support for women in, or escaping, abusive relationships; support for children with special needs and their parents; expand the existing foodbank; 'funday & lunch' for children and parents during school holidays; a food club - £5 a week subscription guaranteeing a sizeable bag of essential groceries each week and a debt/benefits advice clinic.

4. Our afternoon teas will continue on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 2.30pm, unless advised otherwise. Open to all so please come and join us and meet up with friends old and new.

Christmas afternoon tea very ably helped by the Mini Vinnies

Over the last 12 months or so we have been delighted to welcome 4 new members. If you feel that you can help us in any way then we shall be very pleased to hear from you at svpstgt@btinternet.com

THANK YOU AGAIN FOR YOUR KIND & GENEROUS SUPPORT