

IMPACT REPORT

2024

Making Strides in our Pursuit
of Gospel Justice

TOGETHER



ecs-nj.org

OUR MISSION AND VISION

TOGETHER



Dear Friends,

I try to begin each day by remembering something I am grateful for – a person, a place, a ministry. The memories change from day to day, but the sentiment does not: I am so very grateful for the work that is done across our diocese, through countless ministries, to support the work of Gospel Justice. Our congregations, clergy and lay leaders work tirelessly together to address human needs and combat social and racial injustice through the work of Episcopal Community Services of the Diocese of New Jersey (ECS-NJ).

This year's Impact Report highlights some of the wonderful ministry that is going on in congregations and communities because of the generosity of ECS-NJ supporters, staff and volunteers. Your time, your talents, and your treasure have made a difference for people across our diocese. Congregations and ministries are stronger because of shared resources and funds. The work we do together matters.

2024 was an important year for ECS-NJ. We said farewell to Deacon Trisha Thorme, our outgoing Executive Director, and we welcomed (back!) The Rev. David Snyder, our Interim Executive Director. I am grateful to Deacon Trisha and Father Dave, and to Melanie McLaurin, Assistant Director of Communications and Development, for their dedication, enthusiasm, and leadership of the work of ECS-NJ. Their efforts have helped ECS-NJ to grow and have strengthened the work of Gospel Justice throughout our diocese.

I am excited to see where ECS-NJ will go in 2025. We look forward to calling a new Administrative Director to guide and strengthen our efforts. We remain committed to supporting the work of Gospel Justice through advocacy, education, grantmaking, fundraising, and prayer. In this season, when so many in our communities are vulnerable and in need, we are thankful for opportunities to serve, support, and care.

I am excited about the mission and ministry of ECS-NJ as we move forward together. Thank you for your support, for your commitment to Gospel Justice, and for your participation in this important work.

Faithfully,

The Right Reverend Sally French
Bishop of New Jersey

Episcopal Community Services (ECS-NJ) increases the capacity of the Diocese of New Jersey to proactively address community-identified human needs, such as food and shelter, and relentlessly work against both social and racial injustice.

We accomplish these goals by:

- 

Providing grants to our ministries and projects
- 

Offering educational and training opportunities
- 

Opening up crucial connections and networks
- 

Advocating for meaningful systemic change

Messages from our **Leadership**



Dear Friends,

This Impact Report reflects the growth of Episcopal Community Services of the Diocese of New Jersey (ECS-NJ) into a more mature organization supporting Gospel Justice throughout the diocese. The Board of Directors held its first two meetings and organized the new 501c3 corporation.

We give thanks for our first Executive Director, Deacon Trisha Thorme, who provided inspiration and spirituality as well as the leadership and organization skills needed to promote our growth prior to her move to Rhode Island. We are profoundly grateful to Father Dave Snyder, who stepped up to serve as Interim Executive Director and to Melanie McLaurin, who did an outstanding job in her first full year as Assistant Director of Communications and Development, and to all the members of the Advisory Council without whom none of this progress would be possible.

In 2024, we passed the significant development milestone of over one million dollars raised since our beginning in December of 2020. We funded 8 grants totaling \$95,066 to support community-identified projects. We provided liturgical support for ECS Sunday that was also Rogation Sunday on May 5. We held workshops on Data that makes a difference: using neighborhood data to inform justice work and Asset mapping. The fall summit was on Code Blue Housing, providing shelter during cold nights. We advocated for the Poor People’s Campaign and their voter registration efforts.

In 2025, we expect to hire a new Executive Director early in the year. We plan to expand the number of churches and people working for Gospel Justice through prayer, education, advocacy, grant support and fund raising.

Faithfully,

Nina Dixon
Rosina (Nina) Dixon
Chair, ECS-NJ Advisory Council



Because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:576).

Dear ECS Community,

I want to begin by thanking each of you for your partnership in establishing ECS-NJ as a viable organization promoting Gospel Justice and proclaiming the truth of God’s fierce and relentless love here in the Diocese of New Jersey. Thank you for making 2024 a year where we have achieved significant milestones in ministry to the most vulnerable in the communities served by our congregations. There is no question that we could not have achieved what we have been able to achieve this year without the support and generosity of all of our faithful partners in ministry. I know that you share my deepest gratitude to Bishop Chip Stokes whose vision for the creation of an organization within the Diocese of New Jersey that would provide funding to expand existing outreach ministries and create new ministries made ECS-NJ possible, and for the support and encouragement of Bishop Sally French; for the members of the Advisory Council who do so much of the “heavy lifting”; to our 24 Founding Congregations whose early investment enabled us to successfully launch this ministry in the midst of a global pandemic.; for Canon Joan Petit-Mason and Dcn. Trisha Thorme whose leadership and commitment were critically important in launching this new initiative. I also want to express our profound gratitude for each of our donor-partners whose generosity made it possible to reach the \$1 million dollar milestone before the end of 2024. These gifts and pledges (large and small) have enabled us to provide critical funding of nearly \$500k to dozens of congregations in our Diocese. So much has been accomplished in such a short period of time, and for that we give thanks. But we have only just begun and I am convinced that God has plans for this organization which we can’t even begin to imagine. The challenges we face are formidable, but together we will continue to make a lasting and sustainable impact on the ministries of the congregations of the Diocese of NJ and on the lives of the people they are privileged to serve. In closing, I want you to know that am humbled by the remarkable impact ECS-NJ has made in just over four years. I will be forever grateful for the honor and privilege of having had a small role to play in the launching of this organization, first as Development Officer and, for the past eight months as, Interim Executive Director. May God continue to bless the important Gospel Justice work we are privileged to do together.

Faithfully,

Dave Snyder
The Reverend Dave Snyder
Interim Executive Director

DOING OUR PART

TOGETHER

At ECS-NJ, our commitment to social justice is rooted in education and advocacy. We believe that empowering individuals with knowledge and amplifying their voices are essential steps toward creating a more equitable society. Through initiatives like voter engagement campaigns and community programs, we strive to address systemic inequalities, promote civic participation, and uplift those most affected by poverty and injustice. Together, we can build a future where everyone has the tools and support to thrive.

ECS's 2024 Workshop Series: Equipping Communities with Essential Knowledge

In 2024, ECS offered three dynamic Zoom workshops, delivering valuable insights on critical topics to support community initiatives.

Spring Workshops: Leveraging Data for Grant Writing

ECS began the year with workshops focused on gathering and using data to strengthen grant proposals. The Rev. Dr. Molly James led an engaging session on gathering and analyzing quantitative data from existing sources, empowering attendees with tools to interpret and present impactful statistics. Dr. Jennifer Dunkle, a respected academic from the Department of Social Work at Stockton University and now a member of Rutgers, New Brunswick's Institutional Review Board, introduced participants to asset mapping. This qualitative approach to data collection highlighted strategies for identifying and utilizing community resources effectively.

Preparing for Code Blue: A Fall Workshop

As colder weather approached, ECS collaborated with Trinity, Asbury Park, to deliver an informative session on setting up a Code Blue program within parishes. The presentation opened with a historical overview of homelessness and income inequality, providing essential context for the challenges faced by vulnerable populations. Practical guidance on logistics and funding followed, equipping attendees with actionable steps to launch effective emergency services.

ECS's workshops throughout the year empowered communities with practical knowledge, fostering collaboration and enhancing their ability to make a meaningful impact.

New Jersey Poor People's Campaign (NJPPC)



ECS-NJ partnered with the New Jersey Poor People's Campaign (NJPPC) to engage underrepresented voters, particularly poor and low-wage workers, ahead of the November election. Volunteers were invited to assist during their free time to help ensure local residents were registered, informed, and encouraged to vote.

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

TOGETHER

With the support of a grant from Episcopal Community Services (ECS), Christ Church partnered with Emanuel Lutheran Church and Unity Square Community Center, a ministry of Catholic Charities, Diocese of Metuchen, to create the Choice Food and Resource Center (CFRC). This collaboration enables the churches to better serve the New Brunswick community by combining resources and offering guests a more accessible and efficient experience. Located in one of the city's poorest areas, Unity Square provides a fully handicap-accessible facility with first-floor space, accessible bathrooms, an indoor waiting area, and a large overhead door for deliveries.

The CFRC allows families to schedule monthly appointments to select food tailored to their needs, offering a greater variety of items sourced through Replenish, the Middlesex County food bank. The Unity Square van ensures reliable transportation of these supplies. Christ Church's personal care ministry continues to provide essential items, such as diapers and sanitary products, which parishioners package monthly. Volunteers also assist with guest registration, food distribution, and unloading deliveries, helping to meet the needs of the growing number of households served.

The ECS grant enabled CFRC to modernize its operations, transitioning from paper to digital record-keeping with the purchase of electronic tablets. Additionally, the grant funded staff support during the transition, including a Food Coordinator and bilingual Community Organizers to better serve the largely Spanish-speaking community. Since the move to Unity Square, CFRC has expanded its reach, serving 358 households in November 2024 compared to 167 in December 2021.

CFRC also connects guests to vital resources through partnerships with local organizations offering health screenings, family wellness services, shelter assistance, and help with SNAP benefits. The collaborative efforts of Christ Church and its partners reflect a shared commitment to addressing community needs and fostering connections that make a lasting impact.

Photograph: Food pantry (Christ Church) in New Brunswick

ECS-NJ grants are designed to expand existing compassion and justice ministries of congregations and make new ones possible. Since the Fall of 2021, we have awarded almost \$479,000 to 37 churches in the Episcopal Diocese of New Jersey. Projects proposed for ECS-NJ funding should address at least two of the following objectives:

- To meet human need in underserved and marginalized communities, especially communities of color
- To engage, collaborate and partner with other organizations, including faith-based, secular, community, governmental, etc.
- To encourage advocacy for issues relating to social justice, including spearheading new advocacy efforts, particularly those affecting underserved or marginalized communities.

Because of the generosity of donors, we have been able to support the launch or expansion of many ministries across the Diocese, supporting churches providing food, shelter, education, legal assistance, medical equipment, employment assistance & training, community support and so much more.

Tackling Obstacles. Delivering Solutions.

*In 2024, we awarded **\$95,000** to eight projects in the Diocese*

Church and County

St. Augustine-Atlantic City:
Christo Rey-Trenton:
Christ Church-New Brunswick:
Christ the King-Willingboro:
St. James-Bradley Beach:
St. John's-Little Silver:
St. Peter's-Clarksboro:
Trinity Cathedral-Trenton:

Project

To provide capital resources for a food pantry.
To help fund a summer Youth program in 2025.
To provide capital for the expansion of its homeless shelter.
To provide equipment for a computer training program.
To provide luggage for foster children.
To provide capital for a community garden.
To defray the cost of a freezer for its food pantry.
To provide capital for the launch of a food preparation training program.

CELEBRATING A MILESTONE OF GENEROSITY AND IMPACT

TOGETHER

As 2024 came to a close, Episcopal Community Services of the Diocese of New Jersey (ECS) celebrated an extraordinary achievement: surpassing the \$1 million mark in funds raised since our inception just three years ago. Together, we reached an astounding total of \$1,003,840—a milestone that reflects the unwavering generosity and compassion of our community.

This accomplishment stands as more than a financial figure. It represents the power of collective action fueled by faith and love. Each donation contributed to this milestone has been a beacon of hope, providing vital resources to support our neighbors in need across the Diocese of New Jersey.

A Season of Giving: 2024 Year-End Appeal

The spirit of giving shone brightly during our 2024 year-end appeal. With your support, we raised over \$41,000 to close the year on a high note. These funds have strengthened our ability to address pressing challenges, from providing emergency aid to supporting programs that uplift the most vulnerable among us.

Your gifts are more than contributions—they are acts of love that ripple through our communities, transforming lives and offering hope to those who need it most.

Looking Ahead

As we celebrate this incredible milestone, we remain committed to our mission of putting faith into action. With your continued support, we look forward to making an even greater impact in the years to come.

Thank you for being an integral part of this journey. Together, we are building a stronger, more compassionate community—one act of generosity at a time.

WORKING

TOGETHER

FOR A BETTER TOMORROW



“ECS-NJ is my choice for living my faith” -Nancy Carson
St. Mark’s Basking Ridge

Nancy Carson, an Episcopalian, member of St. Mark’s in Basking Ridge and ECS-NJ donor, shares her commitment to living out the Gospel call to serve neighbors and those in need. Reflecting on her own efforts, she states, *“As an individual, I can certainly accomplish some of this task. I can work in my own neighborhood when I see need and contribute through my own church and other groups. I help with the local food bank and other programs.”*

However, Nancy recognizes the challenges of addressing broader systemic issues alone. After five years in the Diocese of New Jersey, she has come to appreciate the impact of Episcopal Community Services of New Jersey (ECS-NJ). She highlights the organization’s dedication to real, meaningful change at both the personal and policy levels. *“I believe that by donating to ECS-NJ, I increase the net value of my dollars and multiply my giving,”* she explains.

ECS-NJ partners with congregations and individuals facing hardship, advocating for those without a voice and engaging public officials in meaningful dialogue. Nancy emphasizes the importance of ECS-NJ’s locally driven approach, ensuring that programs align with the needs of parishioners rather than being imposed from above. Through ECS-NJ, she feels empowered to live her faith fully, stating that it allows her to *“walk the walk”* rather than just *“talk the talk.”*

With a deep belief in the organization’s mission, Nancy encourages others in the Diocese to contribute at any level, ensuring that ECS-NJ continues to grow, flourish, and put faith into action.

ECS Sunday Prayer



Compassionate God, you called us to establish Episcopal Community Services of the Diocese of New Jersey: endow us with the vision to balance charitable giving with advocating justice, so that both the source and symptoms of oppression will be overcome; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

With Special Thanks to Our Sustaining Congregations

- St. Luke's-Gladstone
- Trinity Cathedral-Trenton
- St. John's-Salem
- St. Bernard's-Bernardsville



"We are honored to be a Founding Congregation supporting the compelling and meaningful work that ECS-NJ is catalyzing in the Garden State."

-Church of the Holy Spirit, Lebanon



Coming up in 2025!

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

ECS-NJ Grant Information Session

April 1-30, 2025

Required Letter of Intent to Apply for an ECS-NJ Grant Due

May 4, 2025

ECS Sunday

Coming Soon!

Educational and Events

and Our Founding Congregations

- Trinity Church, Asbury Park
- St. Mark's, Basking Ridge
- All Saints, Bay Head
- St. Bernard's, Bernardsville
- St. Peter's, Clarksboro
- Trinity Church, Cranford
- St. Francis, Dunellen
- St. Peter's, Freehold
- St. Luke's, Gladstone
- St. Thomas, Glassboro
- Grace, Haddonfield
- Holy Spirit, Lebanon

- St. John's, Little Silver
- Grace-St.Paul's, Mercerville
- Trinity Church, Moorestown
- Christ Church, New Brunswick
- St. Matthew's, Pennington
- Trinity Church, Princeton
- St. George's-by-the-River, Rumson
- St. John's, Salem
- St. Peter's, Spotswood
- Trinity Cathedral, Trenton
- St. Paul's, Westfield
- Holy Apostles', Yardville

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Staff

The Reverend Dave Snyder, *Interim Executive Director*
Ms. Melanie McLaurin, *Assistant Director of Communications
and Development*



808 W. State Street, Trenton, NJ 08618
609.394.5281 info@dioceseofnj.org
www.ecs-nj.org