2021 Impact Report
The year 2021 continued to be a challenging one for residents of the City of Alexandria. Christ Church redesigned our outreach ministries 2020 with health and safety protocols in mind in order to serve the community during this time of crisis, and these changes continued in 2021. We are a successful safety net because of the relationships we have established with other communities of faith, non-profit partners, and the city government. This solid foundation has supported the dramatic shifts in our service delivery while maintaining our ability to serve.

This report highlights the impacts of our outreach ministries in 2021. Guided by our desire to be in relationship with our neighbors, we offer care, support, encouragement, friendship, food, and financial assistance. Each ministry requires collaboration, commitment, trust, and, most of all, faith. Our work together over the past two years shows that with God, all things are possible. Our resilience in the face of humanitarian crises has kept many people housed, fed, and safe. Thank you for your contributions to this vital work in our community.

Melanie Gray, MSW
Director of Outreach and Mission

Thank You Christ Church Outreach Leaders!
Amy Bacon, Jane Baird, Barbara Boehm, Sam Brathwaite, Julie Duke, Barbara Fallon, Trish Fineran, Denise Jean-Claude, Andrea McNicholas, Anne Ramsey, Nick Wasilewski, Julie Zahn, and Matt Zahn.
Lazarus Emergency Financial Ministry

Trained financial counselors work with Alexandria residents who are seeking emergency financial support with rent, utilities, and medical bills.

In 2021, we continued to operate our emergency financial ministry as a call-in helpline, answering 1,264 calls over 49 weeks. Calls are picked up and returned within 24 hours in English and Spanish Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. In addition to financial assistance, we provide case management, advocacy, and, most importantly, compassion and a listening ear.

Rental relief was top of mind in 2021, and Christ Church Lazarus counselors worked diligently and quickly early in the year to disburse just over $100,000 in bridge funds from the City of Alexandria. Once those funds were spent, donations from Christ Church parishioners, the wide Alexandria community, and a number of churches and other non-profits allowed our counselors to continue to help those in need with rental assistance, utility payments, medical bills, and other emergency expenses.

In total, 601 individuals were assisted with 932 payments over the course of the year, totaling just over $300,000. The average financial assistance provided was $326.76, and 47% of bills were paid in full.

“Thank you for seeing me, listening, caring, and loving me when I truly needed it most. You’ve allowed me to focus on healing for a few weeks. Thank you for the sense of peace, renewed spirit, and hope.”

OUTREACH BY THE NUMBERS

The year 2021 continued to be a challenging one for residents of the City of Alexandria. Our outreach ministries were redesigned in 2020 with health and safety protocols in mind in order to serve the community during this time of crisis, and these continued in 2021. We are a successful safety net because of the relationships we have established with other communities of faith, nonprofit partners, and the city government.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>380</th>
<th>21%</th>
<th>1,264</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER OF BILLS PAID IN FULL</td>
<td>increase over average check written in 2020</td>
<td>TOTAL REQUESTS FOR FOOD OR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE</td>
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<td>30% Lazarus guests who are single parents</td>
<td>$338 Average rental assistance provided</td>
<td>601 Alexandrians receiving financial assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>$304,540 TOTAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED IN 2021</td>
<td>Requests for assistance come from Old Town</td>
<td>&gt;33% Lazarus guests who are employed</td>
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<tr>
<td>JUNE Month with largest number of requests received</td>
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Refugee Ministry

Beginning in 2016, Christ Church and other local churches have provided assistance, support, and friendship to refugee families in Alexandria who are here seeking safety and freedom.

In 2021, we helped families enroll in English classes, obtain new computers and driver’s licenses, connect with Workforce Development to find better jobs, and access medical care. Three of our families bought homes in 2021, and one enrolled in George Mason’s MBA program. We continued our partnership with the Religion and Resettlement program at Princeton University and we were blessed to have a summer intern from Princeton work with our ministry. For a little fun to kick off summer, we collaborated with Temple Beth El, Rock Spring United Church of Christ, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to provide each family a gift package, which included books, art supplies, watermelons, dried apricots, pistachios, and gift cards. The St. Stephens St. Agnes Upper School Book Buddies Club tutored children in our ministry in the fall, and treated them to free books and pizza.

With so many of the families in our ministry originally from Afghanistan, the second half of the year was very difficult. Many returned to Afghanistan in summer 2021, fearing it could be the last time they would see their family. The withdrawal of US troops in August and the very quick takeover of the country by the Taliban was devastating for those in our refugee ministry who still had family members back in Afghanistan. Every day we heard stories of the effects of the turmoil: sisters sold to the Taliban as brides, a family making it to Pakistan only to find an even greater threat, people going from safe house to safe house. We received photos of family members, including children, who had been beaten, shot, or lost limbs in bombings.

Seeking to stand together with our friends at this difficult time, care teams from our refugee ministry, together with our partner churches Emmanuel Episcopal, Fairlington United Methodist, Immanuel Church on the Hill, and Rock Spring United Church of Christ, set up a fundraiser with the goal of raising enough funds to pay the rent for these families so that they could send the money they would have used for rent back to Afghanistan.

Thanks to your generosity, we raised over $42,000 in funds. All of our Afghan families remain worried for the lives of family and friends still in that country, and we invite your continued prayers for peace.

Over the full year, we provided financial assistance totaling nearly $70,000 to 22 families. In the last few months of 2021 we brought several newly arrived Afghan families into the ministry, and look forward to having more opportunities to gather in friendship in 2022.
We began making contact-free deliveries of groceries and gift cards on May 1, 2020, as a replacement for our typical weekly in-person food pantry. We are grateful to Trinity United Methodist Church for allowing our grocery delivery ministry to operate out of its space. In 2021, volunteers made 463 deliveries, serving 1,188 individuals. We spent over $25,000 on grocery gift cards, food, and household essentials like dish soap and toilet paper. Our partnership with the Capital Area Food Bank and our food rescue ministry make these deliveries possible.

Every summer Christ Church volunteers rescue fresh food each Saturday from the Old Town Farmers Market in partnership with St. Paul’s Episcopal Church. Groups of dedicated volunteers gather to collect, bag, and haul donated and unwanted produce, eggs, and fresh baked goods from participating vendors. In 2021, we rescued over 3,000 pounds of food from area farmers and merchants, which is used to fill bags in our grocery delivery ministry. We also rescue food each week from local stores including Mason & Greens, MOM’s Organic Market, Panera, and Trader Joe’s.

Rotating with other churches in Alexandria, Christ Church parishioners prepare and serve lunches at Meade Memorial Church for 45–55 hungry people each day. In addition to sandwiches, cookies, and fruit prepared daily, soup is served during winter months. We have also expanded our offerings to include hot lunch items, such as hamburgers. In 2021, volunteers prepared and served meals for 54 days. With an average of 26 lunches made each day we serve, we provided 1,404 bag lunches in 2021.

Carpenter’s Shelter is one of two shelters in the City of Alexandria that provides services to individuals and families. Christ Church volunteers cook and serve dinners on site every other week, with pandemic protocols in place. In 2021, we served approximately 25 dinners to a total of 625 residents.

After a 15-month hiatus, Christ Church returned to delivering meals for Meals on Wheels in July 2021. While many of the regular volunteers returned in July, not all were ready to do so, and we are grateful for the addition of several new volunteers, which enabled us to cover four or five routes during the year.