



Children's Services Continue as Rosa Parks Children & Youth Program Closes



▲ Despite the closing of the Rosa Parks Children & Youth Program, seasonal events like the Back-to-School Backpack Giveaway, Trunk-or-Treat, Christmas Toy Giveaway, and the Easter Basket Giveaway will continue.

Closing a program is never easy, even when certain realities make it necessary. Despite the efforts of our dedicated staff and after careful and prayerful consideration, including an independent program evaluation by Wayne State University and the recommendation of our Advisory Council, we decided to conclude the Rosa Parks Children & Youth Program. The last day of operation was Friday, May 22.

On that last day, each child present was invited to take home up to eight books from the library. The remainder of the books and other supplies will be shared with the Epiphany Center, an afterschool tutoring program located in the Samaritan Center, just a few blocks from Conner and Deo Gratias Ministries.

Closing Rosa Parks was a difficult decision. For more than 25 years, the Rosa Parks program was a valued part of our ministry. We will always be grateful to Sr. Nancy Ann Turner, O.P., who founded the program, and to the staff members who served the children.

The decision reflected declining enrollment, significant population loss in

the surrounding neighborhood, the rise of afterschool programs within the schools, and the need to direct our resources where they can serve the greatest number of our neighbors. Demand for our meal programs and food pantry has grown substantially, and that growth is expected to continue.

Before making the public announcement, I had lunch with Sister Nancy Ann and shared the news with her. As you can imagine, she is saddened and disappointed, but I believe Sr. Nancy also understands the reason we made this decision. We also discussed her legacy and how it lives on in the children whose lives she touched.

We continue to serve children. Our Conner Community Center remains open and ready to serve families seeking a meal. Many families with children shop at our Capuchin Services Center. We will continue with seasonal events like the Back-to-School Backpack Giveaway, the Christmas Toy Giveaway, Trunk-or-Treat, and the Easter Basket Giveaway. Children will always be welcomed and cherished at the Capuchin Soup Kitchen.

by Br. Gary Wegner, OFM Capuchin
Executive Director

WORKS OF MERCY

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The Capuchin Soup Kitchen depends on others in the community who share our concern and commitment to people in need. You can view and sign up for the volunteer opportunities below here:

<https://ofmcap.cc/CSK-Vol>

Capuchin Soup Kitchen – Meldrum & Conner locations:

- Preparing food & trays for guests
- Wiping and sanitizing dining room tables and chairs
- Special events & projects

Capuchin Services Center:

- Sorting and organizing clothes
- Stocking and organizing food items
- Special events & projects

Earthworks Urban Farm:

- Mixing soil/making soil blocks or germination trays
- Planting/seeding/thinning seedlings
- Cultivating/weeding beds & flipping compost
- Other tasks related to gardening or farming

On the Rise Bakery:

- Assist in making baked goods
- Wrapping and labeling baked items
- Help with cleaning tasks as needed



The Lord Gave Me Brothers

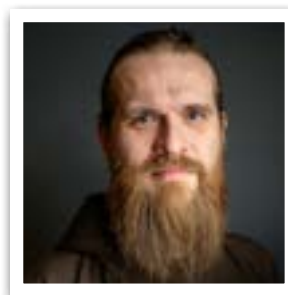
*by Br. Gary Wegner, OFM Capuchin
Executive Director*



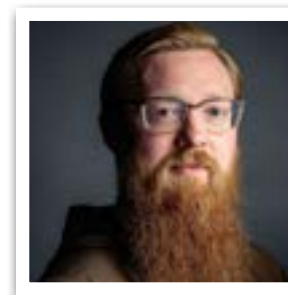
2026 marks the 800th Anniversary of the Transitus or Passing of St. Francis of Assisi. St. Francis begins his final Testament, written shortly before his death, with the words “The Lord gave me brothers.” Br. Tien and I know that without our generous donors, hardworking volunteers, and dedicated staff, we could do nothing. However, an occasion such as this anniversary has led

me to reflect on the many friars – from Blessed Solanus and Br. Herman to Br. Jerry Johnson has led this ministry with unselfish commitment.

As Director of the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, I, along with Br. Tien am grateful to our Capuchin brothers who continue to support this ministry. Here are their pictures and ways they serve.



▲ Br. Fred, (L) Br. Dijan (C) and Br. Thomas (R) work day in and day out to serve the guests. Other brothers respond unselfishly when called upon.



▲ Br. Bill Hugo (L) and Br. Jonse Iesak (C) serves on the CSK Advisory Council. Br. Nathan Linton (R) is the Vocation Director for the Capuchin Province of St. Joseph. A couple of times a year, he brings potential candidates for the Order to serve lunch at the Conner kitchen, thereby introducing them to our ministry.



▲ Br. Nick Blattner (L) reviews many resumes and conducts interviews to fill positions at the Soup Kitchen. Br. Dave Preuss (C) has worked with Wendy Casey, Director of Earthworks, on the orchard. He also worked to secure support for the Bakehouse project from our neighbors. Br. Mark Joseph Costello (R) has put in many, many hours helping us with the Refettorio project. He has been an invaluable liaison from the first time he watched a 60 Minutes episode on the Refettorio movement until today.

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The Lord Gave Me Brothers - continued



◀ Br. Brenton Ertel tries to attend as many Visitations or Funerals of benefactors as possible who leave a bequest to the Capuchin Soup Kitchen in their will or families who designate the Soup Kitchen for Memorial Gifts. Many families have expressed their gratitude for Br. Brenton's compassionate ministry.

▶ Br. Peter Kafumu, the Vice Rector of St. Lawrence Seminary High School, plans and accompanies the SLS students to Detroit, where they serve at Meldrum, Conner, Earthworks, and the Services Center.



Br. Tien and I call upon our Capuchin brothers to support many of our fundraising events. Most minister elsewhere, so we are very grateful for their willingness to give of their time, especially on a Friday or Saturday Night.

We try not to take our brothers for granted. All of them have their own ministries and responsibilities, and we are grateful that they support the Capuchin Soup Kitchen when possible. We appreciate that our Capuchin brothers are also willing to represent the Capuchin Soup Kitchen at fundraisers for numerous partner agencies.

St. Francis once said to his first brothers, "We have been called to heal wounds, to unite what has fallen apart, and to bring home those who have lost their way." They were an imperfect group, as are we today, perhaps not quite so dramatically imperfect as told in this beloved story of St. Francis:

While St. Francis was out begging for food for the community, due to low provisions, three robbers came to the door of the monastery and asked for food. Br. Angelo, the guardian of the community, knew who they were and sent the three away to reflect on their sins. When Francis heard that Angelo had sent them away, he immediately confronted him: "It is you who have sinned!" And Br. Angelo was sent out to find the robbers and bring them the food for which Francis had begged. Br. Angelo found the robbers and ate with them; all prayed for forgiveness. And, you guessed it, the three robbers joined St. Francis and the Franciscan community and stayed for the rest of their lives.

"The Lord gave me brothers." St. Francis knew in his heart this simple truth as did Blessed Solanus, Br. Herman and all the friars who have served at the Capuchin Soup Kitchen. For those who will one day serve, we say "Thank God, ahead of time!"



School Supplies Drive Begins!

Summer is the perfect time to help students get ready for a successful school year! This year, instead of providing pre-packed backpacks, students in Kindergarten through 8th grade will shop for their own school supplies based on their individual school supply lists. Your support helps ensure every student has the opportunity to choose the items they need to start the year with confidence.

You can shop using our supply list or by scanning the QR codes below to browse our wish-lists at Amazon and Target. Donations can be mailed or dropped off at the Conner Soup Kitchen (4390 Conner, Detroit MI 48215) Monday-Friday (8am-5pm) and Saturdays (8am-1pm). Please contact Maxwell Morrison at mmorrison@thecapuchins.org with any questions.

School Supplies List

17-19" backpacks	24 pk Crayola Crayons	12 Colored Pencils
10 pk Crayola Markers	Kids Scissors	Glue Sticks
Rulers	Pks of Wood Pencils	Pencil Cases
Pks of Mechanical Pencils	Pencil sharpeners	Blk/Blue Pens
1 Subject Notebooks	Pkgs Ruled Paper	Highlighters
Composition Notebooks	2 Pocket Folders	Pink Eraser
Calculator	Scotch Tape	Index Cards

Online School Supplies Gift Registries



Amazon



Target

Volunteers Honored at Annual Dinner



▲ L-R; Kenn Bakowski, Amy Bakowski, Br. Gary, Br. Tien, Greg Piangerelli, Phil Rucinski



▲ Colleen Spillard at Meldrum Fresh Market

In the spring, the Capuchin Soup Kitchen honors our volunteers at a Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. Some volunteers receive the Silver Soup Bowl Award in recognition of their outstanding service to CSK and our guests. Below are some highlights:

Colleen Spillard: Since beginning her service with the Earthworks program, Colleen has demonstrated a consistent commitment to advancing our mission. In the field, she works with focus and consistency, contributing to essential growing tasks that sustain our operations.

Phil Rucinski: While serving at the Conner Soup Kitchen, Phil assists with breakfast service and food preparation. Recognizing the need for more consistent support in food preparation, Phil stepped up and served multiple times a week. Throughout it all, he remains a dependable backup whenever additional help is needed for meal service.

Greg Piangerelli: A dedicated and dependable volunteer who supports the Capuchin Soup Kitchen across multiple programs and events, Phil regularly assists with our shower program, showing up consistently—regardless of the weather—to ensure guests are welcomed and cared for with dignity. In addition, Greg serves at our Meldrum Soup Kitchen, where he helps serve meals.

Amy and Kenn Bakowski: A husband-and-wife duo, Amy and Kenn Bakowski are regular volunteers at our Capuchin Services Center. Kenn and Amy are valued volunteers in the food pantry, generously dedicating their time multiple times a month. Kenn and Amy help ensure shelves are stocked, food is sorted, and that every guest can shop with dignity.

Last year, volunteers contributed over 34,000 hours to the Capuchin Soup Kitchen. More importantly, it has been done with joy and hospitality. Thank you, Colleen, Phil, Greg, Amy, Kenn, and all our volunteers. We couldn't do it without you!

CAPUCHIN SOUP KITCHEN

CSK Conner Meal Site:
4390 Conner
Detroit, MI 48215
313-579-2100 ext. 4216

CSK Meldrum Meal Site:
1264 Meldrum
Detroit, MI 48207
313-579-2100 ext. 2205

Spiritual Care:
Offered at both CSK Conner &
Meldrum Meal Program Sites
313-579-2100 ext. 2209

Capuchin Services Center:
6333 Medbury St
Detroit, MI 48211
313-925-1370

On The Rise Bakery & Cafe:
1780 Mt Elliott St
Detroit, MI 48207
Phone: 313.922.8510

Earthworks Urban Farm:
1264 Meldrum St.
Detroit, MI 48207
313-579-2100 Ext. 2204

Jefferson House:
8311 E. Jefferson
Detroit, MI 48214
313-331-8900

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 Instagram.com/capuchinsoupkitchen

 Facebook.com/CapuchinSoupKitchen

 **YouTube**
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