



**Society of St. Vincent de Paul
St Michael Conference
2024 Report to St Michael Catholic Community**

The Society of St Vincent de Paul, St Michael Conference, was established 31 years ago, in January 1994.

The Mission of the Society of St Vincent de Paul (SSVP) is to live the Gospel message by serving disadvantaged individuals within our parish boundaries with respect, justice, and joy ... regardless of creed, ethnicity, or point of view. Members meet regularly to pray, deepen their understanding of the Society, share ideas, discuss challenges encountered in serving the poor, and develop fellowship. Our funding is entirely derived from the parishioners of St Michael Catholic Community who donate with great generosity, kindness, and thoughtfulness, for which we are eternally grateful.

Volunteers

We currently have **56** active members serving in various capacities (e.g., home visitors, food purchasers and larder committee, phone coordinator, banking director, or special advisor). Our executive team is comprised of the President, a banker, a treasurer, and a secretary. In the past year, our dedicated team of volunteers has contributed over **2032** hours to serving the needs of the less fortunate in our community. Two of our current members, **Paulette Crawford** and **Paula Smith** were *founding* members of the St Michael SSVP conference 31 years ago. They enthusiastically continue to donate their time and talent in serving the poor and providing guidance, support, and mentorship to those of us who gratefully benefit from their experience and expertise.

We are also blessed to have **Father Kelvin Chukwurah** as our Spiritual Advisor, who fosters the spiritual development of our members.

Challenges in 2024

Financially, we are struggling with high food costs and high need within the community. In mid-2024 we had to put a freeze on rent and utility assistance, after providing considerably more aid in 2024 for rent/utility assistance than any other parish or Conference in our Western Calgary peer group including St. Peter's, St. Bernard's, Holy Name and Sacred Heart.

Our operation focused on food assistance in the local community, supporting the refugee family as per our commitments, and providing assistance to St. Bernard's SSVP who were heading for bankruptcy while surrounded by critical need in the Bowness area.

Donations

Our operation would not be possible without the generous donations of our community. We greatly rely on the parishioners of St. Michael's Catholic Community for their ongoing support of our effort. In 2024 we received over **\$162,000!** Thank you for your generosity! Please be aware that going into 2025, one in ten Calgarians are either living low income or below the poverty line. Calgary is the second most unequal city in Canada for income distribution. The SSVP work continues and relies on your support! Options on how to donate are provided at the end of this report.

Food Distribution and Home Visits

In the past year, volunteers visited **124** homes, providing support to **479** adults and **418** children, preparing and delivering **258** food hampers. Members always conduct visits in pairs, reaching out to individuals where they live: listening, encouraging, and hopefully being a friend. We also provide regular food support for a Refugee family.

"I have been out of the workforce a decade now. I've long left behind a somewhat comfortable lifestyle shared with loved ones filled with sporting events, concerts, and occasional nights out or weekend trips. I've lost loved ones

through disease and tragedy, facing my own demise presently and accordingly lost my faith along the way. Your efforts, assistance and support through my journey are very much recognized and appreciated and somewhat reinvigorate that diminishing faith. – Vincentian friend

Larder and Food Costs

We have a dedicated team, led by Lora Saccomani, to ensure our food larder is well stocked and ready for food hamper preparation. Over recent years our food budget has doubled, due to high demand and an increase in food prices. In 2024 we've spent and distributed over **\$34,000** in food. We are projecting a \$40,000 larder budget in 2025 to respond to the challenging economic climate.

Financial assistance

Although our core service is to provide food hampers, we also assist with rent, utilities, and other urgent needs as feasible. Over **\$32,000** was provided for rent and utility assistance in 2024. Due to the high demand in assistance requests versus financial constraints and operational commitments, we made a decision to pause rent/utility assistance mid-2024 to be resumed in 2025. We also refer individuals or families to other community agencies better equipped to meet ongoing needs when the situation is beyond our ability to manage.

"Just wanted to say a huge thanks to your Church/Organization for the tremendous help that you guys have been to me. I am so thankful for the generosity and kindness that you have shown me. Paying those utility bills for me is such a blessing, it took so much stress off me and helped to lower my anxiety. I didn't know how I was going to get them paid and keep them from being disconnected. I called just about every Organization, community services, and Alberta works, and got no help. I prayed and asked God for help because I was really in a hard difficulty place, and He reminded of St. Michaels Church, and connected me to you. Words cannot express how grateful I am for all that you have done for me. I pray you will always be in the position to help others in need, and that donations and blessings will continue to flow in abundance. Thank you, thank you thank you." – Vincentian friend

"I want you to know how much gratefulness I have for you and your Catholic community. You have given me and my 2 girls a chance to rise above the darkness and reach the light again, I truly do not know what I would have done without your help with my Telus bill, the move and the spiritual support in dealing with my husband's major surgery. Thank you for listening to my call and for helping me in my most desperate time of life." - Vincentian friend

Twinning

"Twinning" is one aspect of Vincentian work where we reach out and share our resources and deepen our Vincentian spirit of friendship with our Brothers and Sisters in the solidarity of universally helping the poor. Our conference started a twinning partnership with SSVP Reina De La Paz Conference, Guatemala in 2015.

The SSVP Reina De La Paz conference needed support for their coffee and bee projects to serve their community. Through our fraternal twinning with Reina De La Paz conference, we at St Michaels conference want to serve God's will and share our mutual resources through solidarity.

"We are very grateful for the financial support that SSVP St Michaels Conference provides to Reina de La Paz, otherwise, it would be impossible for this conference to help so many poor families in our communities with food and medicines. SSVP St Michael's Conference contributions, helps Reina de La Paz so much with the expenses to support the progress of both the coffee project and eventually the return to the Bee project." – President SSVP Reina De La Paz Conference

St. Bernards SSVP Conference Assistance

SSVP St. Bernard Conference supports the communities of Bowness, Greenwood, Montgomery, St. Andrews Heights, Parkdale, and Green Briar. In recent years SSVP St. Bernard's conference faced a growing demand for food hampers with dwindling donations. The conference provides 40-60 hampers per month. In May of 2024 the conference made an appeal to St Michael's conference and St Peter's Conference requesting a monthly support to keep them for closing their doors in October of 2024.

St. Michael's conference has pledged their financial support of **\$1500/month** to help St. Bernard to continue the work of helping and meeting the basic need of food in their community. St Michael's Conference also extends support to St Bernard's Conference by including **30 families** in need, each year in the Christmas Hamper program.

"I would like to mention again that having this extra help has made a world of difference in our ability to plan and provide for our clients. We no longer need to be thinking week to week if we can survive." -SSVP St Bernard Conference

Christmas Hamper Program

The **Christmas Hamper** program, made possible through numerous volunteer hours devoted by members of the Christmas Hamper Committee, is largely funded through the St Vincent de Paul Society. This year, over **409** parish volunteers prepared and delivered **169** hampers, serving **664** individuals, of whom **360** were children. Hampers consisted of nonperishable foods, gift cards and gifts for children.

The total value of the Christmas Hamper program this year was **\$71,537** which comprised of cash directly expended, as well as donated gifts.

Parish schools supported the program with food drives and student volunteers. Special thank you to Colleen Fitzpatrick and her Christmas Hamper team, and the SSVP members especially, Barb Mulcahy, Lora Saccomani, Lana McFadden and Deana Helton our School's Liaison, the volunteers and the support of parish administration and staff in the success of this year's program.

Webpage

We have developed a webpage containing information on our service to the community, how to reach us in need, Vincentian spirituality, our programs, testimonials, additional resources for those in need, links to follow us on social media and an opportunity to volunteer and donate. <https://www.ssvpstmichael.ca/>

Finances	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Total Revenue	162,350.34	\$197,881.87	\$177,889.02	\$90,576.30	\$146,193.77	\$125,026.72
Total Expenses	140,691.01	\$166,828.98	\$232,819.90	\$110,582.75	\$98,438.45	\$108,571.15
Deficit/Surplus	21,659.33	\$31,052.89	(\$54,930.88)	(\$20,006.45)	\$47,755.32	\$16,455.57

Disbursements

Bank Service Charges	\$ 52.80
Bus Tickets	\$ 1,160.00
Christmas Hampers/Gift Cert.	\$55,000.00
Client Household Items	\$500.00
Client Medical	\$ 435.41
Client Other	\$ 41.99
Client Refugee Settling expense	\$ 410.45
Client Rent	\$ 24,360.00
Client Transportation	\$ 100.00
Client Utility	\$ 8,124.51
Client Work	93.03
Food Purchases for Larder	\$ 34,513.70
Gift card expenses	\$ 1,402.00

Paid to St's Mark/Bernard SVdP	\$6,020.00
Paid to West Particular (Tithe)	\$5,000.00
SSVP Supplies	\$456.80
Twinning	\$3,025.00
	\$ 140,691.01

Please look for more information about the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in the Church bulletin and our Website throughout our 31st year!

Donations

As we look forward to another challenging year of serving our community. This would not be possible without your generous donations via these platforms:

- Cash and cheque: Envelopes located / dropped off at SSVP Food Chest in the Narthex
- Online: <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/st-vincent-de-paul-society-st-michaels-conference/>
- Tip Tap machine: to be introduced in 2025
- Nonperishable food donations: SSVP Food Chest in the Narthex

Thank you so much! God bless!

“Help honours when, to the bread that nourishes, it adds the visit that consoles, the advice that enlightens, the friendly shake of the hand that lifts up sinking courage; when it treats the poor man with respect, not only as an equal but as a superior, since he is suffering that which we would perhaps not be able to bear ourselves; since he is among us as the messenger of God, sent to put our justice and charity to the test, and to save us by our works.”

(Frederic Ozanam, from an article in l'Ère nouvelle, October 21, 1848)

Please contact ***the Society of St Vincent de Paul*** at (403) 240-0423, extension 122 or visit our website www.ssvpstmichael.ca you have questions or would like to join our Ministry.