



## CELEBRATING GOD'S WORK IN 2020

*Greetings! In 1860, The Rev. James Crowe, a German immigrant, and a handful of others like him broke ground and built the Norris Square Presbyterian Church. Today, the West Kensington Ministry continues to be deeply rooted in that same faith tradition, worships in the same space, and works faithfully to be relevant to its surrounding community and the issues it faces. We, a new wave of urban-dwelling immigrants, with the strong support of our partner churches and the Presbytery of Philadelphia, are honored to stand on the shoulders of those Jesus-followers and share with you some of accomplishments and work in the community.*

### When I Was Hungry - During the Times of Corona - You Fed Me...

“No, we don’t choose the days, as the church, but we do decide what to do with the days that are given - says the church,” preached a colleague to his congregation recently.

WKM, through the support and resources of individuals, partner churches, the Presbytery of Philadelphia, Easter Outreach, the Share Food Program, and the City of Philadelphia, has been blessed to be a relevant presence in our community. “We are now in the food distribution business,” I have found myself repeating to people when they inquire of WKM’s recent activity.

On Mondays and Thursdays, the City of Philadelphia drops off multiple pallets of food



boxes as early as 7:30 am in front of the church. And, already there is a line is formed of elderly Latino men wearing Vietnam war veteran hats with their carts, women with a child or two and young parents – all separated 6 feet from each other by yellow chalk lines in the concrete. The lines have not decreased months later as they snake towards the church from two on-coming directions.

Volunteers, with masks and gloves, come from all over the city and distribute the food as we play upbeat and joyful Latin music. A community is being built as Officer Cabrera

from the Philadelphia County Sheriff’s Office and his partner are a consistent and positive presence as they themselves help hand out the food boxes that can only be distributed from 10am-12pm at the 40 chosen sites across the city of

Philadelphia. In 2010 our neighborhood was officially recognized as a food desert by Alfred Lubrano, a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist from the Philadelphia Inquirer in his Thanksgiving Day article, Seeds of Hope. This article highlighted WKM as a place working to be a positive force in what was then the second hungriest place in America. There

has been significant development and some long-term residents have had to move because of rental property increases. Despite the changes, violence, generational poverty, and hunger still persist. Thus, WKM, because of our location and intentional and continual presence and involvement in the quality of life issues that affect us (from immigration, strengthening community-police relations, the

opioid epidemic, cleaning our park, and working with youth) was chosen as one of the 40 city-wide distribution sites on Mondays and Thursdays when the Coronavirus pandemic began.



At the same time, Easter Outreach, whom WKM has worked with through a partner church for years on Holy Saturdays distributing Easter meals, decided to provide food for Philadelphians on a continual basis. Easter Outreach and its network of churches throughout the week deliver food to WKM, organize and pack it and deliver it to hundreds of Philadelphia’s

most vulnerable on Saturdays. Relationships between Liberti River Wards Church and Urban Worship Center have developed. All three of our congregations are within walking distance from each other and although we differ in many ways, our love for Christ and community has brought us together “for such a time as this.” And it only took a global pandemic to do it.

In addition to Monday & Thursday food distribution (with Wednesday recently added, with support from partner congregations) and Saturday deliveries by Easter Outreach, WKM distributes food on an appointment basis, and does its best in delivering it throughout the week. Some of Philadelphia's most vulnerable, who for legal status issues are afraid to stand in line in broad daylight for fear of ICE (Immigration Customs Enforcement) agents, are being fed. Elderly people and young ones as well who have tested positive for Covid-19 are being fed as we safely deliver them food. People of all economic classes, many who have lost their employment, are being fed.

Everyday there is something food-related happening at WKM. It could be a member of a partner church who owns a supermarket and deli bringing casseroles and sandwiches. It could also be Danilo Burgos, our PA State Representative, picking up and dropping off a freezer donated by a member of a partner church who owns a restaurant equipment business in the suburbs.

Indeed, WKM is thankful to the many who support us and enable us to do the work we are doing and we are blessed as we are led by the Spirit, and as my friend and colleague preached "No, we don't choose the days, as the church, but we do decide what to do with the days that are given - says the church."

### **Heroes of the Day Open Air Pop Up Portrait Exhibit**

Luis "Suave" Gonzalez, an artist and friend of WKM, brought 75 portraits of essential and frontline workers and placed them on the church fence and inside our space on Thursday as food was distributed. At the beginning of the Covid 19 Pandemic, Luis decided he would paint someone on a daily basis and his work is being recognized throughout the city and is drawing national attention. "These are people who will not make the history books but are important nonetheless," Luis shared as he told stories of the people he painted. WKM and Broad Street Ministry, where Luis works, will soon have a permanent collection of the Heroes of the Day Essential Workers Portraits.





## Hope Concerts in the Time of the Corona

Voices, violins, guitars, a cajon (Brazilian percussion instrument), a saxophone and even a bassoon graced WKM’s historic sanctuary as hundreds of people tuned in to Facebook Live and listened to local artists share their talents. On Easter morning a Scottish Fiddle player who is a Presbyterian Chaplain played dressed in the traditional Scottish kilt. People appreciated the music and shared how it was an escaping and soothing time in the beginnings of Covid 19 and quarantine.



The Inquirer Unlimited Access Log In

### church, a call for musicians to help a city waiting to exhale | Helen Ubiñas

Updated: April 9, 2020 - 9:29 AM

Helen Ubiñas | @NotesFromHel | hubinas@inquirer.com



## COMING SOON: A PEACE PRODUCTION

In August, in adherence to City of Philadelphia safety guidelines, “A Peace Production” will engage at-risk Kensington youth to address the trauma they have experienced as a result of gun violence. WKM was one of 40 organizations to be approved for the Targeted Community Grant, but due to Covid-19 “A Peace Production” had to be postponed. We are glad to have received news that we can carry out the project in August in fewer numbers and following all safety standards! Through mental health groups and writing workshops, youth will document their trauma and learn how to express their feelings through music production at the Gage Recording Studio. The project will serve youth and will culminate with a performance (perhaps virtual now) where youth will share their artistic productions.

## Building Bridges Youth Mentoring

The Building Bridges Youth Mentoring Program continues despite these trying times. Mentors and mentees continue to meet via cell phone and Zoom. An end-of-school-year gathering took place as we maintained social distancing and wore masks, etc. A good time was had by all and Building Bridges continues to recruit and attract mentors and mentees. Building Bridges is a one on one mentoring program where mentors, after a background clearance and training, meet once a week w/ their mentees for an hour. The youth are between 10-16 years of age and the commitment to meet is for one year. Building Bridges strongly supports the relationship by checking in on the mentor once a week and provides gift cards for outings. If you are interested please contact us.



## Immigrant Relief Fund

Immigrants, many of whom are essential workers, have been negatively impacted throughout the Corona Virus pandemic. Many have been furloughed or lost their way of earning an income. Our immigrant brothers and sisters do come to receive food on an appointment basis at WKM as we serve dozens of families per week. To help visit WKM's website and hit the donate button and dedicate your contribution to the Immigrant Relief Fund.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

*In addition to your financial contributions and volunteer hours, we are in need of:*

- 2 Standing Hand Sanitizer Stations
- 2-3 Office chairs
- 1-2 Coffee Table
- 2-3 Plastic Heavy Duty Trashcans (w/ lids and castor rollers)
- 2 Dolly/handtrucks
- 1 Long Sturdy Garden Hose w/ Nozzle
- 2 Flatbed rollers (not too big)
- 3-4 Lawn chairs
- 1 Picnic Table w/ Umbrella

### **WEST KENSINGTON MINISTRY**

2140 North Hancock Street, Philadelphia, PA 19122

Phone: 267.879.6310 | Email: [adan@westkensingtonministry.com](mailto:adan@westkensingtonministry.com)

**WEST KENSINGTON MINISTRY**  
2140 NORTH HANCOCK STREET  
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19122