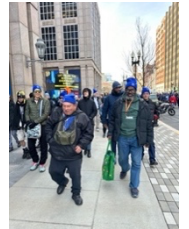


MANNA COMMUNITY ANNUAL REPORT 2023

A Year of Celebrations!

In February, members of the community bundled up to participate in the Winter Walk. In 2023, MANNA became a partner of the Winter Walk organization whereby MANNA received a portion of the general funds raised by the Winter Walk, in addition to funds raised by our team. The MANNA team raised \$8,056, received \$10,951.00 from the general split, for a total of **\$19,007!** Yay MANNA Team! We are looking forward to Winter Walk 2024.



Another way the MANNA community likes to support local efforts to fundraise and raise awareness about food scarcity and homelessness, is by participating in the Walk for Hunger each May. MANNA is a community of people who actively experience food insecurity and who understand the importance of balanced nutrition for overall well-being. The community thrives when we join forces with Project Bread to raise money to feed others. This year, MANNA contributed \$1513.00 to Project Bread. Well done team!



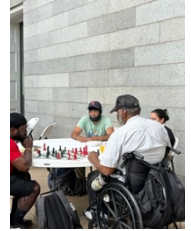
It is a great gift when MANNA can collaborate with The Crossing and the Sunday morning congregation at the Easter Vigil. Playwriter, Richie Berman, LOVES to choose a story to perform with the rest of the community at the Vigil. This year's story was Noah's Ark and MANNA did not disappoint! Members of the community helped with set and costume design, script writing, and biblical story telling. It's an absolute joy to witness the community having so much fun!



The BACHome Council, whose origins began in the MANNA community, continues to provide wisdom to the Mayor's Office of Housing from the perspective of people with lived experience of homelessness. The council is facilitated by Rev. Jennifer and Chaplain Elaina and meets twice a month at City Hall. Due to the incredible commitment of the council members, BACHome has had a significant impact on shelter reform and housing stabilization in the City of Boston. In May 2023, St. Paul's was chosen by the mayor's office to host the presentation of \$16 million dollars from HUD to the City of Boston, in support of unsheltered homelessness.



Over the summer months, Ministry of the Steps provides a fun space for musicians and poets to offer their gifts on the steps of the Cathedral. MANNA folks love to get up to the mic and read their poetry which can be heard all the way across the Boston Common. Sometimes, a passerby will want to join in and sing a song, play an instrument, or dance to the music on the sidewalk! Chess games are always a favorite at MoS!



Writers Group is thriving thanks to the Black Seed Writers and the efforts of James Parker and Christie Towers. Each Tuesday morning, Sproat Hall is filled with a robust energy for creative writing and poetry. We enjoyed two wonderfully successful public readings this year; one at the Brookline Book Smith and one at the Copley Library.



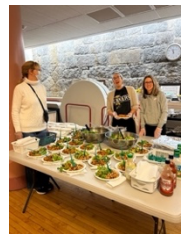
Annual MANNA Day of Gratitude (Thanksgiving)

Once again, the MANNA community, in partnership with the Black Seed Cafe, hosted a beautiful Thanksgiving dinner for more than 150 guests on Thanksgiving Day. We have tremendous gratitude for everyone at the Black Seed Cafe, who prepared and donated the meal and for all the volunteers who spent the day serving alongside us. It was especially meaningful this year in the midst of all the global conflict and violence, to partner with our Muslim siblings who pray each week at the Cathedral.



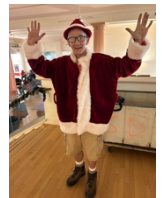
Monday Lunch Program

Thanks to our parish partners (St. Michael's Milton, Christ Church Needham, Trinity Church Concord, All Saints Brookline, and St. John's Newtonville) we continue to enjoy an amazing hot meal every Monday. Whether a holiday or a snowstorm, our faithful partners deliver a nutritious meal with a main course, fruit, and cookies, sometimes along with juice boxes, Ensure, and warm hats knit with love. Our parish partners share their gifts with us in so many ways: through prayer, in-kind donations, volunteering in our space, financial support, and handwritten notes that arrive attached to the casseroles. Thank you for all the love!



The Living Room Scene (Christmas Eve)

Nothing gives us greater joy than transforming Sproat Hall into a cozy living room scene and inviting the neighborhood in to decorate the Christmas tree, share food, sing carols together, and be the chosen family we are called to be. This year we also enjoyed Christmas dinner together on Christmas Day, in partnership with common cathedral. The community prepared a delicious Christmas ham dinner to share with almost 100 people who joined us for dinner. We had a blast!



A year of challenges and transitions, too!

2023 was a year of transitions for the MANNA community. We said “goodbye” to several staff members who were called to practice ministry in different communities far and wide. Rev. Paul Shoaf Kozak answered a call with a new community in Trenton, N.J., Cristo Rey, where Rev. Paul and his family are enjoying being immersed in a Spanish speaking community. Molly Minnerath, MANNA’s first full-time chaplain, left MANNA in the spring of 2023 for an intensive Clinical Pastoral Education program and to take some time to discern her next steps in the process to become a priest. Molly is now serving as a Pastoral Associate at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Bedford, MA. Eva Ortez was ordained Deacon in June of 2023 and is now serving at St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church in Boston’s South End. Eva’s ordination to the Sacred Order of Priests will be January 13, 2024. Congratulations Eva! We are missing all these beloved pastors and are deeply grateful for the many gifts they shared with MANNA.

Springtime and summer can be hard for the community, saying goodbye to beloved pastors and interns, but usually by fall, we are once again saying, “hello!” This year was no different. We welcomed Samantha Mossing, our Boston College intern, who hit the ground running even though she had little to no experience with people experiencing homelessness. Our community has been enriched by her compassion and thoughtful theological reflections. In October, we were grateful to hire Elaina Taze Smith. Elaina joins our team as an experienced chaplain and will soon be completing her Doctorate in Pastoral Counseling. She is also the current Kitchen Manager at the Friday Night Supper Club at Arlington Street Church. Welcome Elaina!

Christie Towers graduated with her MDiv. from Boston University (along with Eva) in May of 2023, and is now serving as a full-time chaplain for MANNA. Christie is a gifted writer and pastor and co-edits the *Pilgrim Magazine* with James Parker. She and James empower the Black Seed Writers to find their gifts for poetry and reflections and share them with the world. In the fall, we had a public reading at the Brookline Booksmith where many writers performed their pieces to a standing room only audience. In early December, the writers took the stage at Boston’s Copley Library and once again, filled the auditorium. James has been with the community for over 12 years and still enters the space on Tuesday mornings with exuberant energy to excite and encourage the writers, whether they’ve been attending Writers Group for a long time, or whether it’s their first time there. Issue #51 of the *Pilgrim Magazine* was distributed in December and our writers were so proud to see their work in print and in such an impressive magazine!

Christie also offers her pastoral gifts at the Barbara McInnis House twice a week, where she and Rev. Jennifer hold worship for respite patients on Sunday afternoons, and Christie spends a few hours during the week offering one-to-one care for the patients. Barbara McInnis House is a respite care center at Boston Health Care for the Homeless on Albany Street in Boston.



Gratitude! Gratitude! Gratitude!

We are deeply grateful for all the love and care we are given by so many people and by multiple communities. Our community members, our parish partners, our donors, our volunteers, the health care teams that visit us at MANNA, the Cathedral staff and congregations, Chapter members, and those who travel the halls at 138 Tremont St. Thank you! We are grateful for all the socks, the gloves, the hoodies, the sweatpants, the underwear, the Hot Hands, the ponchos, and the hand knit hats. Thank you! Most of all, we are grateful to God for the abundance of gifts and blessings that flow through our community, daily. Our prayer each day is this: "Thank you, God, for waking us up today and bringing us to this place in safety. Thank you for the gift of each person and the gifts that each person brings to this space." Amen!



Submitted by Rev. Jennifer McCracken