

St. John's Reformed Church Food Pantry

Introduction: Americans spend about 10% of their income on food. Poorer Americans pay closer to 30%. New York is one of the top 5 states utilizing the federal Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP). Our patrons are least able to absorb grocery price hikes. The food pantry at St. John's was founded by our Deacons to fill a community need for those who are food insecure. It has been operational for almost 2 decades, serves nearly 1,000 clients annually, and costs over \$20,000 to run each year. A portion of the funding to run the pantry comes from the church budget. The rest of the funding comes from people who donate grocery items, people who donate money to buy groceries or Hannaford gift cards, and organizations that run food drives for the pantry. One of our biggest donors has retired and has cut back significantly on about 2/3 of the weekly shopping. The Deacons are now faced with making some cutbacks on items offered to ensure we can keep the pantry in operation. If you have ever wondered about how the pantry functions, here are some quick facts for consideration:

Who we serve: Anyone living in the Red Hook Central School District is eligible to shop at our food pantry. The majority of our clients are those who work but are unable to make financial ends meet.

How it works: St. John's food pantry allows clients to shop once per month. One bag of groceries and personal care items are provided. In addition to basic food and cooking staples, we also offer personal care items, dish soap and laundry detergent. A \$15.00 Hannaford gift card is also provided. Clients tell us the gift cards are used to purchase primarily over the counter medicine and fresh meat or dairy products. The pantry is run by volunteers and church staff.

Food Networks: St. John's pantry is independent from the Feeding NYS program (food banks) run by the state. We do not pay the membership fees required, can limit our clients locally to those within the Red Hook Central School District, and can offer supermarket items to our clients that aren't offered by other food banks or allowed under SNAP. We coordinate with other Red Hook food pantries to share donated food before it expires.

Federal Facts: SNAP is administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) on the federal level. The USDA authorizes and monitors retail stores that redeem SNAP benefits. NYS operates the program on the local level, determines eligibility, and issues benefits to qualifying households. Nationally, 2/3 of SNAP recipients are seniors, disabled persons, and children. 1/3 of SNAP recipients have one working adult in the household, generally living paycheck to paycheck.

You can help with our mission by donating grocery items or donating money. Everything goes directly to those in need. Our hours of operation are Mondays 9-12:30 and Wednesdays 9-2:30. You can donate groceries any time the Church is open. To donate money, send checks payable to:

St. John's Reformed Church Deacon's Fund
St. John's Reformed Church
126 Old Post Road North
Red Hook, NY 12571

St. John's Reformed Church Food Pantry Stock

Pantry clients living in the RHCSD are eligible to shop once per month, one bag per family.

A \$15.00 Hannaford gift card is provided to purchase perishable food.*

Pantry items are donated by church members and community patrons.

The following items are stocked in our pantry:

Breakfast

Cold cereal, plain and variety oatmeal, quick oats, pancake mix, syrup

Lunch/Dinner

Mashed potatoes, canned fruits, canned vegetables, tuna, chicken, spam, pasta, pasta sauce, white rice, baked beans, canned pastas, macaroni and cheese, soup, hash, chili, peanut butter and jelly.

Condiments/Cooking/Baking

Flour, sugar, vegetable oil, salt, ketchup, mayo, mustard, salad dressing

Beverage

Ground coffee, tea bags

Laundry/Personal Care

Toilet paper*, facial tissues, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shave cream, razors, bar soap, shampoo, laundry detergent, dish detergent

*Toilet paper and \$15 Hannaford gift cards are supplied by the church.

Pantry supplements: We get produce, bread, meat and bakery products from an area church pantry delivered about once per month. The boy scouts and Mill Road School generally conduct food drives in the fall which benefit the pantry.

We are always in need of paper bags with handles and reusable shopping bags.

We served over 800 families in 2024 and are on track to exceed that number in 2025.

We have seen an increase in patrons due to inflation and uncertainty with SNAP and HEAP benefits. We consistently evaluate ways to keep our operations efficient and client needs met with these challenges.

**PANTRY DONATIONS CAN BE DROPPED OFF AT THE CHURCH ANYTIME
DURING OFFICE HOURS**

ALL DONATIONS ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED!