



## NCC Urban Churches Continue to Serve Their Neighbors



Northern California Conference (NCC) churches continue to engage their communities with compassion. Here are some of their stories.



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*El Sobrante Appian Way ACS members help housed and unhoused people in need.*

### **El Sobrante Appian Way Church**

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, the El Sobrante Appian Way church carries on with its outreach efforts through its Adventist Community Services (ACS) program. Every Sunday and Wednesday, the program distributes food, clothing, masks, and hand sanitizer to those in need.

During the first part of the year, ACS assisted about 100 households each month. By April, they were serving more than 300 families monthly. "I so appreciate our church's ACS volunteers because they are the hands and feet of our Lord to meet the needs of the community," said Pastor Long Thatcher. "Their faithful service helps to ease the burden of hardship for many."

Not only is ACS serving households in their local community, they have also reached out into neighboring communities to help unhoused people. Church members donated toiletries, masks, and sanitizer, and ACS volunteers prepared sack lunches, bottled water, and hot beverages to deliver to homeless campsites in the cities adjacent to El Sobrante.

Asked why they volunteer, ACS members had a long list of reasons, including: we get to share prayer and



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testimonies; we enjoy the fellowship with the community and each other; we are doing what God wants us to do.

Eleven-year-old Adam Thatcher recently joined ACS. “I like to give food to people who need it,” he said. “I feel very good about it.”

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*By Tanya Clay*



*Oakland Market Street church members deliver hot meals and other necessities to unhoused people in Alameda County.*

### **Oakland Market Street Church**

Oakland Market Street church members serve their community by delivering hot meals from local restaurants to unhoused residents throughout Alameda County.

Recently, when a local food distributor shut down, the church was asked to partner with Alameda County Food-Poole and the nonprofit organization Preventative Care Pathways located in the Dr. James A. Watson Wellness Center.

“Everyone deserves to have food, and no one should have to go to bed hungry,” said Margaret (Margo) Williams-Cohen, the project’s director of food administration and distribution. “It is an absolute honor and privilege to feed God’s people.”

In addition to food, volunteers distribute other items to help improve the lives of unhoused people. Recently, a local dentist donated 864 bags of toothbrushes, toothpaste, and floss; a law firm purchased 2,140 bottles of water; and a community member gave 1,600 bags of utensils and two huge boxes of toilet paper.

Williams-Cohen is assisted by recording secretary/deliverer Monique Chancellor, Bible worker Michael Jones, and a team of volunteers with servant hearts. “Many blessed hands—from the five-star restaurants to our committed volunteers and drivers—are working hard to serve the new homeless, on the rise from the impact of the pandemic,” said Chancellor.

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*By Julie Lorenz*



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*The Sacramento Capitol City church operates a cooling center, staffed by volunteers, for unhoused people and others without air conditioning.*

### **Sacramento Capitol City Church**

Temperatures in Sacramento have soared to more than 110 degrees this summer—record heat that endangers unhoused people and anyone without air conditioning. In partnership with the city and county, the Sacramento Capitol City church opened up a cooling center in its fellowship hall, which can accommodate up to 80 people with distance between them for safety. A local government agency provides snacks, water, and some volunteers.

“People who come to the center are very appreciative,” said Carol Herbert, the church’s mission council leader. She observes how tired the guests are when they arrive and how happy they feel to rest in a cool place. One man sometimes entertains the other guests by playing the piano. “He lights up the whole room,” said Herbert. “When he plays, everyone gets excited about it.”

Herbert has formed relationships with the community volunteers who help staff the center—taking temperatures, distributing masks, and cleaning. She is grateful for their help and eager to share more about her church. “The volunteers come in and are excited to work,” she said. “They are so impressed with what we are doing, and they ask questions about who we are.”



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