

St. Elizabeth's Report for 2025 Diocesan Convention

“And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?” Micah 6:8

St. Elizabeth's Essentials Pantry, a Mission of the Episcopal Diocese of Maine and supported by eight Portland-area partner churches, was established in 2001 in response to those living in poverty on the peninsula who struggled to make ends meet. Today, the faces have changed but the mission remains the same: To welcome the stranger and to stand with those who live on the margins by providing basic household essentials.

Each Tuesday we distribute household and personal care items essential to daily living and not covered by food stamp/SNAP benefits, including items like toilet paper, toothpaste, baby diapers and kitchenware. Neighbors who come to us each week represent long-time Mainers as well as the growing number of asylum seekers from across the globe who have found their way to Portland in search of safety and a new life among us. On any given Tuesday morning one can hear over 20 languages being spoken.

2025 has seen a significant increase in attendance with an average of 350 individuals coming to our doors each week, up from an average of 180 just two years ago. Concern for their safety and well-being is a priority during this time of fear and uncertainty for many. Creating Safe Haven protocols and offering 'Know Your Rights' cards in multiple languages are tangible ways we are supporting this vulnerable population.

Beyond providing compassionate welcome and basic household essentials, St. Elizabeth's Pantry strives to make our small corner of the world more just and to offer kindness to those who struggle mightily to make ends meet, and above all, to keep hope alive.

To learn more about the St. Elizabeth's ministry, visit www.stelizabethsmaine.org.