

Partners Newsletter

Winter 2026 | Edition #108



Catholic
Charities
Diocese of Covington

Sleep with the Angels

By Jill Walch, Director, Donor and Volunteer Engagement

As the chilly air settles in this time of year, I am reminded how simple gifts can make the biggest difference. Thanks to the incredible generosity of our supporters, Parish Kitchen once again hosted a beautiful and successful sleeping bag and blanket drive. Because of you, someone out there will face a harsh winter night with a little more warmth and comfort, and a little more hope.

When our children were small, every bedtime ended the same way: "sleep with the angels!" It was our quiet wish for them to know they are surrounded by our love, a wish for their safety, their peace, their warmth. In many ways, your kindness extends that same blessing to our neighbors, wrapping them in care they may not otherwise feel.

Amid the busy holiday season, it's easy to get caught up in the moment and react to the rush; more to do, more to buy, more to manage. In a world that glorifies more, I think God often invites us in the opposite direction: toward simplicity, contentment, and quiet joy.

My hope for you this season is that you find peace by continuing to notice God's handiwork in the everyday moments; how gratitude shifts us not because our circumstances change, but because our perspective does. Let's not overlook the blessings right in front of us.

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Community
Charity
Compassion
healing
Education

A Letter from the Executive Director



Charitable Works in Action – Celebrating 2025

Dear Friends,

Last year at this time, as we looked forward to 2025—the Jubilee Year and Pope Francis' theme, Pilgrims of Hope—I shared my hope that we would create opportunities to encounter Christ through service and compassion. Pope Francis writes, "For everyone, may the Jubilee be a moment of genuine, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus, the 'door' (cf. Jn 10:7, 9) of our salvation, whom the Church is charged to proclaim always, everywhere and to all as 'our hope' (1 Tim 1:1)." He emphasized that mercy and works of compassion—feeding the hungry, visiting the sick, comforting the sorrowful—are ways we lead others to Christ and experience true transformation ourselves.

As 2025 draws to a close, we hope that our ministry has reflected this call. Thanks to the incredible generosity of our volunteers and benefactors, our mission has touched thousands of lives, offering hope, encouragement, and practical support to neighbors in need.

This year, more than 700 volunteers gave freely of themselves, reflecting the spirit of mercy in every act. In our Jail Ministry, 627 total volunteers visited 2,558 individuals where they served, offering friendship and spiritual support. Parish Kitchen served 50,686 meals. Pickett's Corner distributed 425 bicycles. The Mobile Food Pantry reached 1,864 households, while St. Joseph Apartments benefited from property enhancements and a new multipurpose space. Behind the scenes, 65 volunteers supported administrative work.

Every volunteer, every gift, every hour of service matters. Thanks to you, 2025 has been a year of compassion, hope, and tangible impact. As we look to 2026, there is much to anticipate—and with your continued support, countless more lives will be touched by generosity and love.

In Christ,
Chris Goddard

NEW DATE ALERT! Cassba 2026 Sunday, August 23

Please update your calendars—the previously published date was incorrect. This is the official date!

Stay Connected with Catholic Charities

Join Us on our
Social Media pages to
Stay Connected!

To stay up to date with our events, outreach, stories, and ways to get involved, please follow us at:



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News and Events

Giving Tuesday Recap – Catholic Charities

By Emily Hudepohl, Communications and Marketing Specialist

On December 2, Catholic Charities participated in Giving Tuesday, a global movement that inspires generosity and charitable giving around the world. This was the first year our Diocese joined this initiative, and the results were truly encouraging.

Catholic Charities raised an incredible \$11,423.40 in a single day thanks to the generosity of our donors! These contributions will help us continue serving those in need through our ministries and programs. We successfully met our fundraising goal, and this one-day achievement reflects the strength of our mission and the compassion of those who believe in it.

Giving Tuesday is more than a fundraising event, it's a worldwide movement that reminds us of the importance of giving back and supporting causes that matter. We are proud to have been part of this effort and are excited to participate again next year as we continue building on this momentum.

Thank you to everyone who contributed and helped make this first Giving Tuesday a success for Catholic Charities and our Diocese!



Honoring 28 Years of Heart and Service: Congratulations

By Jennifer Abdrabbo, Donor Engagement Manager

Have you ever worked with someone that was not just a co-worker but family? After 28 incredible years, we are celebrating the retirement of someone who has truly been the heart of Catholic Charities of Covington—Vicky Bauerle. She has always brought kindness, dedication, and a deep love for helping others. Her creative spirit has been at the heart of Cassba and is the reason we will be celebrating our 39th year for this beloved event come August 2026.

Over the years, Vicky has touched countless lives—she speaks up when she feels it is important, she listens intently and lets her deep faith in God guide her steps. Her steady presence and warm smile have been a source of comfort for clients and coworkers alike. Simply put, Catholic Charities will never be the same without the legacy Vicky will leave behind.



As Vicky enters this new chapter of life, we want to say thank you—from the bottom of our hearts—for everything you've given to this mission and to our community. You have made a difference that will last far beyond your time here. Enjoy this time with your family and especially your grandson. You deserve it!

Building Community and Faith: Updates from Parish

Catholic Charities is thrilled to welcome Deacon Barry Henry as our new Director of Community Ministries and Outreach. Known throughout the Diocese for his leadership and compassion, Deacon Barry has served with Madonna House, Rose Garden Home Mission, and several diocesan boards. He and his family have also fostered infants for more than a decade, deepening his understanding of vulnerability and advocacy.

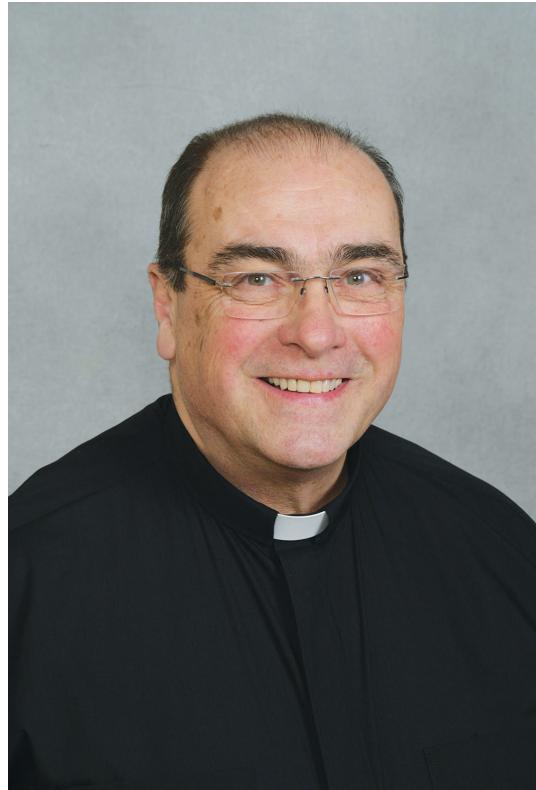
"What draws me to Catholic Charities," he shared, "is the vital work of accompanying those most in need." In his new role, Deacon Barry will oversee transformative programs such as Parish Kitchen, the Mobile Food Pantry, Jail Ministry, and Pickett's Corner. He brings energy, vision, and faith to this mission

As we look ahead, exciting developments are underway that reflect our vision and will strengthen several ministries. The multipurpose building is nearing the final stages of planning. Architectural drawings are complete, with only minor adjustments before construction begins. Our goal is to break ground in the first quarter of the year, marking a significant step forward in expanding our capacity to serve.

This new space will be a hub for ministry and outreach. It will house the mobile food pantry truck, ensuring we can reach neighbors beyond our walls. It will also provide storage and workspace for Pickett's Corner volunteers, those involved in the bike ministry, who repair and distribute bicycles to individuals in need. By centralizing these efforts, we'll create a more efficient and welcoming environment for volunteers and guests.

Another exciting addition is the prayer room, located on the northeast corner of the dining room. This quiet, sacred space will offer volunteers, staff, and guests a place for reflection, prayer, or conversation with Deacon Barry. "This room will be a refuge for anyone seeking peace or guidance." For safety and privacy, the prayer room will be accessible only through the kitchen. There will be no outside entrance, ensuring a secure and respectful environment for all.

In addition to these new spaces, there are plans to install a divider between the kitchen and dining room. This feature will provide a dedicated space for meetings, prayer groups, and support gatherings at times separate from meal service. These changes reflect our commitment to creating flexible spaces that serve both practical and spiritual needs.



"What draws me to Catholic Charities is the vital work of accompanying those most in need." Deacon Barry Henry

Parish Kitchen

At Catholic Charities, every project begins with a simple question: How can we better serve our community? The multipurpose building, prayer room, and divider are more than construction projects. They are investments in relationships, faith, and hope. They will allow us to expand our ministries, deepen our outreach, and provide a welcoming environment for everyone who walks through our doors.

As Deacon Barry reminded us, "We are one body in Christ, called to care for one another." With these new spaces and his leadership, we are ready to embrace that calling in new and meaningful ways. Thank you to all our partners and supporters who make this work possible. Together, we are building not just structures, but a stronger, more compassionate community.



PICKETT'S CORNER

**PROSPECTIVE
STUDIO**

ARCHITECTURE / PLANNING / DESIGN

Program Updates

Parents of Addicted Loved-ones (PAL) Free Support Group

2nd & 4th Wednesday of each month 6:30-8:00 p.m.
Catholic Charities, 3629 Church Street, Covington, KY 41015

PAL provides continuing education along with support, at no charge, for parents with a son or daughter suffering from alcohol or drug addiction.

Friends & Family of the Incarcerated Free Support Group

3rd Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m.
Catholic Charities, 3629 Church Street, Covington, KY 41015

A safe, welcoming community where you will be accepted without judgment. Questions? Email Vince Lonnemann: vlonnemann@covingtoncharities.org

Free Homebuyer Education Class

Saturday, January 10, 2026
Saturday, February 7, 2026
Saturday, March 7, 2026
Saturday, April 11, 2026
9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Catholic Charities, 3629 Church Street, Covington, KY 41015

Learn about managing money, budgeting, insurance, inspections, mortgage lending, realtors, protecting your investment and predatory lending.

Class size is limited. Registration Required. Contact Client Care at 859-581-8974.

Mobile Pantry Recap

By John Hehman, Mobile Food Pantry Coordinator

The year 2025 was filled with challenges for the mobile food pantry, from inclement weather to federal budget cuts and the government shutdown affecting SNAP benefits. Despite those challenges, the spirit of giving remained strong. There were numerous people donating money to supplement our food distributions, including an anonymous group that donated \$12,000 which was enough to provide a turkey breast for every household that we served in the month of December.

Through all of these challenges, one thing continues to be consistent: our fantastic staff of volunteers. We are blessed with the over 150 volunteers who staff the pantries. They show up ready to work, most of the time the hall where we are hosting the pantry is set up prior to the food arriving. They assist in unloading the truck and prep for the pantry. They work tirelessly helping our guests pick up their food then assist them in their vehicle with their food. When the pantry has ended, they assist with inventory and loading any left-over food back on the truck. Then the hall is returned to the same condition we found it. We named our program Food For Friends to reflect the compassionate service of our staff and volunteers and the respect and dignity with which every guest is treated.

New Jail Ministry Coordinator

Catholic Charities is excited to welcome Vince Lonnemann as our new Jail Ministry Coordinator! After retiring from a 38-year career in IT at Great American Insurance, Vince felt called to serve in a role that makes a direct impact on those in need. Already active as a volunteer visitor at Kenton County Jail, Vince brings a heart for ministry and a passion for supporting individuals and families during challenging times. We are grateful for his commitment and look forward to the meaningful work ahead!



Program Updates continued

Blessings with Wheels

Pickett's Corner ended 2025 on a high note, thanks to the generosity of donors and the power of community partnerships. Over the past year, 433 bikes were distributed to individuals in need with each one representing more than just transportation. Since the program began in 2023, a total of 1,138 bikes have been provided, creating opportunities for independence, employment, and hope.



One of the most memorable moments of the year came on December 18, when Pickett's Corner partnered with Rose Garden Mission for their Day of Giving. Together, they distributed 138 children's bikes, bringing joy to families and reminding everyone of what can happen when a community comes together.

The impact of these bikes is best expressed by those who received them. One recipient shared, "This bike is perfect. I got a job, but it's a 30-minute walk after I get off the bus. Now, I can bring the bike on the bus and ride just 10 minutes. I can take a later bus, get more rest, and not worry about being late."

Looking ahead, bike distribution will begin again in March 2026. Pickett's Corner is currently accepting new and gently used adult-size bikes. If you or someone you know has a bike to donate, please email pickettscorner23@gmail.com. Thanks to the continued support of donors and partners, the mission of Pickett's Corner is growing. With partnerships now extending to Homeless Veterans and Lord's Gym, the goal for 2026 is clear: keep the wheels of hope turning and change even more lives.

Reflecting Christ's Kindness

By Autumn Ruehl, CSW, Mental Health Counselor

As a mental health counselor, one truth becomes clear very quickly: every person we encounter is carrying a story we cannot see. Beneath outward behaviors—irritability, withdrawal, defensiveness, or even rudeness—there are often layers of grief, fear, trauma, and exhaustion. When we are quick to take offense, we may miss an opportunity to show Christ's love.

Kindness, compassion, and empathy are some of the greatest gifts we can offer. They are not signs of weakness, but reflections of strength and grace. In counseling, we are taught to slow our reactions and ask, *What might this person be dealing with that I don't know about?* That same approach serves us well in everyday life. A sharp comment at the store, impatience in traffic, or tension at work may have far more to do with a silent struggle than with us.

This does not mean excusing harmful behavior or ignoring healthy boundaries. Instead, it invites us to choose curiosity over judgment and grace over reactivity. When we respond with empathy, we create space for understanding and, at times, healing—both for others and for ourselves.

As followers of Christ, our call to compassion runs even deeper. Jesus reminds us to love as He loves, even when it is difficult or unreciprocated (Luke 6:32–36). We may be the only glimpse of Christ someone sees that day. A gentle word, a patient response, or a moment of grace can quietly reflect His love.

Christ has shown us great kindness—undeserved, sacrificial, and abundant. May we extend that same kindness to all we meet, honoring both their humanity and the grace we ourselves have received.



Catholic Charities

Diocese of Covington

Extend a Hand. Change a Life.

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www.CovingtonCharities.org
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Serving the community for over 95 years

Our Mission: We serve all people in our Diocese who lack basic human needs, including physical, spiritual, or emotional, regardless of their religious beliefs.

Using a unique holistic approach, we support and empower our clients to achieve self-sufficiency by providing guidance, tools, and life-skills.

We also serve our volunteers, supporters, and partner agencies/ministries by providing the means for them to serve and assist their neighbors in need through our programs or referrals.

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Diocese of Covington

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Partners newsletter is published three times a year in spring, summer and winter for friends of Catholic Charities. Catholic Charities provides Child and Family Services; Counseling Services; Housing Services; and Community Outreach Services.