



## January Update



Dear Bethel friends,

Happy New Year 2021! The word **“Ebenezer”** keeps ringing in our ears as we said good bye to a tumultuous year, and enter a New Year 2021- filled with new hopes and new opportunities! We thank God for helping us throughout 2020 and leading us individually and as a ministry thus far! God is good, all the time! Thank you for your continued prayer and financial support of our ministry. We cannot wait to see and explore what God has in store for us in 2021. Thank you for your partnership in this ministry that touches and transforms many lives in our city!



As we look back on 2020, it definitely was a very challenging year. We were resilient and we adapted our ways of doing ministry to meet needs that were multiplied many times due to Covid. Although we had to maintain our physical distance, sanitize and mask up to protect the people we serve and to be safe, we continued to run our food pantry throughout the year. By the end of 2020, we had served 23,087 individuals, senior adults, and children through our food pantry. That was a 145% increase from 2019! During the summer months, we gave out a total of 65,000 pounds of fresh produce each week to more than 2,400 families. More than half of the families who came during the summer months were new families who had never used our pantry before. We provided 1,050 face masks to individuals who came to pick up food and some refugee community leaders for distribution.

After the ‘Stay at Home’ order was placed in March, we could not meet in person but we continued our after school and summer programs under the able leadership of our Program Director, Elizabeth Vile. She said, “Through our online video chat programming we were able to serve over 100 students. Students were able to get help with homework, learn about healthy lifestyles (exercise, eating healthy, and mental health), play games such as bingo and jeopardy, and create many different art projects. Some students made us ‘thank you’ cards expressing how much they enjoyed the program and how much they appreciate us and the hard work we put into it. We look forward to what 2021 will bring!” Our students and their families, and our senior citizens received Christmas presents through the Bethel Christmas Shop. They all expressed their gratitude and appreciation as many of them would not be able to have Christmas without the help of so many of you.



We are getting ready to resume our after school program for students from grades 1-12. During our staff training, we reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of our last year’s program, and we discussed ways to improve our program as well. We are thrilled to work with our students this year.

Thank you once again for your continued support. We wish you a very Happy & Healthy New Year!

Rev. Mang & Nem Sonna, Bethel Neighborhood Center