

# THE MICAH 6 AUSTIN MESSENGER

A PUBLICATION OF MICAH 6 OF AUSTIN, TEXAS  
2203 SAN ANTONIO ST./ AUSTIN, TEXAS 78705

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## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ANNUAL COMBINED WORSHIP SERVICE AND ANNUAL REPORT

### BOARD CHANGES

We give special thanks to **Mary Bowles** (University Avenue Church of Christ) who ended her three-year term as board member and pantry operations liaison. Her professionalism and dedication has been a profound gift to this ministry during the transitions of recent years. We also give thanks for the 2010 Board members and officers:

- Gretchen Olson – President (First English Lutheran Church)
- David Wofford - Vice President (University Presbyterian Church)
- Liz Nash - Secretary (Congregational Church)
- Craig Bell - Treasurer (University Christian Church)
- Jim Genevro – Assistant Treasurer (St. Austin's Catholic Church)
- Harriett Choffel – Corresponding Secretary (All Saints Episcopal Church)
- John Bell (University United Methodist Church)
- Pastor Larry Bethune (University Baptist Church)
- Ruth Crowson (University Avenue Church of Christ)
- The Reverend Cheryl Kimble (Highland Park Baptist Church)
- April Kwon (Hyde Park Presbyterian Church)
- Mac McKaskle (University Baptist Church)



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*The Annual Combined Worship Service was held on February 21, 2010 at **University Avenue Church of Christ**. This issue of the Micah 6 Messenger presents news from the service and from the Annual Report. Micah 6 Austin extends heartfelt thanks to University Avenue Church of Christ for hosting our annual service.*

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## THE COALITION BROADENS

You may have noticed the expansion of the Board in the article presenting our new Board members. After volunteering with the pantry and with the God's Family Dinner held at **University Baptist Church, Highland Park Baptist Church** joined the coalition as a new Member Congregation in December. The Micah 6 Board also voted to provide a designation for congregations interested in supporting Micah 6 without board responsibilities. Many thanks to Supporting Congregations: **Central Christian Church, Immanuel Community** and **Southwest Family Fellowship**.

## THE MICAH 6 PROGRAM EXPANDS

In 2009 **Karen Ranus** (St. Austin's Catholic Church) and **Ana Salas-Porras** (All Saints Episcopal Church) led the creation of a Resource Area. Today, seven volunteers staff the table on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays. Karen and Ana say the services continue to evolve. A good part of the work is simply talking to people – some with specific requests, but also some who just want a chance to talk. The volunteers have provided over 100 registration forms for Austin Energy utility assistance. They distribute greeting cards & stamps and provide information about bus passes, ESL training, Food Stamps, clothing, medical care and the most frequent request — employment. The Resource Area has information for Texas Workforce Commission and other job sources, but many pantry shoppers do not have legal status and cannot pursue these leads.

The larger facility has also allowed for an expanded children's area and for space to distribute specialty items as they become available. Sincere thanks to the organizations that donated these items for distribution: 500 blankets (donated annually by **Holy Cross Catholic Church**), 30 goody bags, enough new toys for each parent to select two presents for their children (from **Austin Children's Shelter**) and 100 filled Christmas stockings from the **Holiday Stocking Project**.



Also in 2009, three Micah 6 professional social worker volunteers began offering informal “crisis counseling” to shoppers that seek help while waiting to enter the pantry. The short supportive dialogues are focused on the most immediate concern of the shopper and are guided by a respect for confidentiality and self-determination. The service has helped to ease the personal tensions and anxieties that many shoppers experience in addition to their food needs. Additionally, the **Presbyterian Children's Home and Services** continues to make available a licensed social worker to assist Micah 6 families with children.

Services that the Resource Area is in the process of implementing or is looking toward offering in the near future include:

- Spanish speaking volunteers to facilitate communication
- Continuing to update and expand our Information Box in the Resource Area
- Forging a partnership with the UT Nursing School (who have been regular volunteers in the pantry) to perform regular basic health screenings (e.g., blood pressure, vision, and diabetes screening). Along with that we're developing a list of health resources for low income and undocumented individuals.

## 2009 SEES SIGNIFICANT INCREASES IN THE NUMBER OF SHOPPERS AND SHOPPING TRIPS

Many who had not known hunger confronted it this year. In 2008, pantry volunteers welcomed about 200 first-time shoppers each month. During 2009, the average rose to 330 first-time shoppers each month – an amazing 65% increase in one year.

Previous pantry visitors also found they needed assistance more often. It was evident in the total number of recipient shopping trips — a combined measure of the number of pantry recipients and how often they come to the pantry. In 2008, recipient shopping trips were 13,579 for the year. In 2009, those shopping trips increased almost 50% to 20,174. Similarly, just two years ago, the pantry served about 235 shoppers each week. *By the fall of 2009, the weekly average had risen about 92% to over 450.*

During just the last six months of the year, the pantry served a total of 3,296 households, up 51% over the same period in 2008 and up a staggering 90% over that period in 2007.



Shopper  
Trends

## SPECIAL EVENTS

**VACCINES** – Our thanks go to **Dr. Thomas Hughes** and **Sarah Kiger** of **Capital Pediatrics** on West 39<sup>th</sup> St. In February two nurses came to a Micah 6 Saturday pantry and vaccinated 51 adults and children (out of 217 recipients!) It was very well received. Some shoppers asked about other health services, and we are working on expanding our efforts in that area (see article on page 2).

**STONE SOUP** – On January 31st **University Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)** held a Stone Soup luncheon to benefit the Micah 6 Food Pantry. The theme for this luncheon came from the fairy tale which tells of strangers making a delicious soup for a village. The villagers each contribute what little they have to a communal pot of soup to be enjoyed by all. The story emphasizes sharing and cooperation especially in a time of scarcity. Members of one of UCC's social groups each contributed ingredients and served soup to the whole congregation while asking for a monetary contribution for the pantry. While eating, members watched the slide show from the Micah of Austin website.

This event was in keeping with University Christian's tradition of focusing on Micah 6 each time a month has five Sundays. On a "5th Sunday" the congregation emphasizes the M6 ministry and asks members to support Micah 6 with prayer, a donation of time, non-food items, and/or money.

**SCHLOTSZKY'S** - On Feb. 21, the Schlotzky's at MLK and Guadalupe hosted a Micah 6 Fundraiser and donated 20% of coupon sales to Micah 6. Look for news in the near future for another opportunity to support Micah 6 through a similar fundraiser.

The combined efforts of the fundraisers in later January and in February have raised much appreciated funds for the operation of the Micah 6 Food Pantry at a time when the need is great and continuing to grow. Our thanks to everyone who contributed to these efforts!

*The Messenger is now a quarterly publication.*

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## RECYCLING... NATIONWIDE PAPER DRIVE THIS MONTH!

Please be sure to recycle your paper products at the green/yellow Micah 6 recycle bin located at **All Saints' Episcopal Church** parking lot; 209 West 27th Street. This effort serves two purposes: earning money for Micah 6 and helping recycle paper products into newsprint for the *Austin American Statesman* and *The Austin Chronicle*. The recycled materials are returned to these Austin businesses within two weeks from pick up in our Austin bins. We are helping our community not only with fundraising but also by "staying local" and being ecologically friendly.




And now, the challenge is on! *April is the month for a Nationwide Paper Drive*. We will earn extra points if we recycle more than 4,000 pounds by the end of April. That deadline is soon, so please encourage your neighbors, congregations, friends, Scout troops, and social groups to give you their recyclable paper products and bring them to our bin. We doubled our poundage last year so let's triple it this year. See [www.paperretriever.com](http://www.paperretriever.com) for more information.

## M6 AUSTIN TOOLBAR

We have something new and exciting we'd like to share with you! It's the new Micah 6 of Austin toolbar - once added to Internet Explorer or Firefox, each time you shop at more than 1,300 stores (from Amazon to Zazzle!) a percentage of your purchase will automatically be donated to Micah 6 of Austin - at no cost to you (and you may even save money as the toolbar provides coupons and deals as well!). The toolbar also has a search box and each time you search the Internet, about a penny is donated to Micah 6 of Austin. Get the toolbar now and please pass this along to all of your friends. The two minutes it takes to add this toolbar to your browser can make a lifetime of difference! To add this toolbar, please go to <http://www.goodsearch.com/toolbar/micah-6-of-austin>.

## MICAH 6 PANTRY WISH LIST

Please consider donating one or more of the following items:

-  greeting cards - all types
-  black ink pens
-  volunteers to work on Thursdays and Saturdays (see webpage for Volunteer Information)

## RECENT PANTRY NUMBERS

	Shopping Visits	Persons Fed	New Client Households
Dec	1,287	4,196	277
Jan	2,028	6,520	485
Feb	1,725	5,364	292
Mar	1,290	3,799	193

## Member Churches

All Saints' Episcopal Church  
Congregational Church of Austin  
First English Lutheran Church  
Highland Park Baptist Church  
Hyde Park Presbyterian Church  
St. Austin Catholic Parish  
University Avenue Church of Christ  
University Baptist Church  
University Christian Church  
University United Methodist Church  
University Presbyterian Church

*The mission of Micah 6 of Austin is to work together to identify and meet the needs of the homeless and the impoverished in the University of Texas campus area.*

## Micah 6 Messenger

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Website [micah6austin.org](http://micah6austin.org)

The Micah 6 Food Pantry location:  
University Presbyterian Church  
2203 San Antonio St.  
Thurs 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. &  
Sat 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.

*What does the Lord require of you?*