
What Clergy Are Saying About Interfaith Hospitality Networks . . .

I can't begin to put into words what IHN has meant to us. It has become the focal point for renewal in the life of our church. It has generated a whole new spirit of cooperation and generosity among our parishioners. It's given us new vision for what the Church is.

Rev. David Evans
Shepherd of the Hills Presbyterian Church, Austin, TX

There is such a diversity in the spiritual gifts of individuals. IHN gives occasion for people to use their abilities and skills. Driving a van, preparing a meal, listening to a parent, playing with a child, washing linens, and arranging living quarters are all ministries that bring the gospel of Christ to life. Relationships are formed and fellowship is shared...all to the glory of God and for the good of those who need a blessing.

Dr. Ken Altom
New Hope Baptist Church, Raleigh, NC

In 24 years of pastoral ministry, no human care ministry has so touched the hearts of the people I serve. Of all the outreach ministries of our church, IHN has been easiest to "sell" and the one that fills up soonest with volunteers. After all, it's Biblical. The spiritual gift of hospitality means nothing less than, literally, "a love of strangers." It's real love in action, broadening perspectives on poverty and homelessness, and allowing singles and whole family units an opportunity to be servants and to make new friends at the same time.

Rev. Dean Nadasdy
Cross View Lutheran Church, Edina, MN

Being an affluent suburban community, many of our members have little or no direct, personal contact with homeless families; this opportunity has given us a chance to get to know folks and to learn of their situations, opening our eyes to what are the root causes of homelessness. Our guests have become "real people who are not really different from us." We are humbled by the opportunity to help give folks a "step up" while they are seeking jobs and housing. We see this opportunity as our response to Christ's call to be hospitable to our neighbor.

Rev. Anne D. Kear
Christ Church, The United Church of Christ, Fort Thomas, KY

IHN gives us a chance to act out our commitment. The health of the congregation grows as people reach out in a hands-on way. We are a church committed to serving. People join us because they've heard this is a place to come if you want to get involved. As a result our numbers have increased.

Rev. Phillip Wilson
Church of the Redeemer Episcopal Church, Morristown, NJ

Our numerous volunteers at the IHN continue to enjoy this task month after month and year after year. As much as we are able to provide loving kindness to those guests that we host, we receive even more for ourselves in the sense of purpose, mission, and fulfillment that we find in this religious endeavor.

Rabbi Lewis H. Kamrass
Isaac Wise Temple, Cincinnati, OH

The IHN program offers hope to many who have lost it. The discipline, responsibility and self-reliance that is expected through the day-to-day schedule of work, school and house searching by the participants helps build confidence, maturity and stability.

Rev. Joseph A. Geary
St. Paul United Methodist Church, Memphis, TN

The Matthew 25:35 message to care for our brothers and sisters has been an important part of our mission, but the sight of homeless families standing on street corners has left many of us feeling overwhelmed and unable to help. IHN has been a keyhole through which we have peered and unlocked many of the barriers that have kept us from responding to their plight. Before, we would hand them a dollar, quickly averting their gaze. Now we offer our hands in friendship, and they share with us the news of their lives and accomplishments. The success of IHN in providing a safe environment and a start toward independence encourages guests and hosts that solutions to homelessness can be found.

Fr. Bill Kenny
Christ the King Catholic Community, Las Vegas, NV

IHN has created a platform in which people can use their talents in a unique and special way. People who don't usually get involved in traditional ways will do this. Relationally, it has deepened my bond with parishioners while broadening our perspective.

Fr. Joseph Grosko
Holy Martyr's Catholic Church, Natrona Heights, PA

As we watched the program develop so have we watched the enthusiasm of the Cathedral increase. I endorse IHN without reservation.

Very Rev. H. Scott Kirby, Dean
Christ Church Cathedral, Eau Claire, WI

This has created a team effort where people can work together shoulder to shoulder. This is a Biblical and spiritual experience. Hospitality, in Scripture, is a central theme. This allows us to express that in ways that are deeply spiritual. Being involved in the program has made our people more tender and compassionate. They realize how much that they have and how precious it is. We are transformed as we work with these families. I like the fact that there is a job for everyone; it utilizes a variety of skills and gifts, involving all from children to senior citizens. And because it is a "round-the-clock" ministry, it provides a timeslot for everyone to get involved.

Dr. Larry Bethune
University Baptist Church, Austin, TX

In my 45 years of being a Christian and serving as a minister in several churches, I can say without hesitation that the Interfaith Hospitality Network is one of the most effective ways I have ever seen of enabling church members to experience the joy of hands-on ministry in a very very meaningful way. I have personally witnessed the lives of many members having been changed in a positive way by the ministry of IHN.

Rev. John Barbour
Advent Presbyterian Church, Memphis, TN

IHN allows for the people of our suburban community to come into contact with and help the homeless in our own area. Some of our parishioners feel uncomfortable to drive into the inner-city to help the homeless, but are ready to help when they come into our area.

Fr. Bob Klemme
St. Elizabeth Seton Parish, Carmel, IN

Five years ago—by congregational resolution—we voted to give social ministry a much stronger emphasis. We have been involved in a number of outreach ministries but none has energized our parish like the Network. An added benefit has been the great rapport that has developed with the Roman Catholic parish that is our support congregation. I cannot speak highly enough of the positive impact IHN has had on St. Mark's Church.

Rev. Richard D. Finch
St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Spokane, WA

The Talmud says, that "the poor person [standing at the door] does more for the householder than the householder does for the poor person." I know that our hospitality has been meaningful for our guests, but I am no less certain that it has been a moving, inspiring, and motivating experience for our volunteers. It is tangible proof of the truth that one who give receives back in at least equal measure.

Rabbi Arnie Gluck
Temple Beth-El, Somerville, NJ

Getting involved in the program served as a turning point in our ministry. We were "in-grown", operating in a survival mode. This expanded our vision. IHN attracts more volunteers than any other program in our church. Other mission and outreach opportunities have spun off of it. The program has been a community builder within our church and within the wider community, as it has spawned a mutual concern and response from many congregations. It's given me the opportunity to interact with other clergy and lay people. This is definitely a ministry that God can bless. IHN is both manageable and practical.

**Rev. Don Storey
Spring Woods United Methodist Church, Houston, TX**

We think of homelessness as an inner city problem. But it's not all where we would stereotype it to be. I involved our congregation in IHN because it didn't help cultivate dependencies, but rather tried to help families who are homeless get on their feet in an independent way. When we volunteered to host Christmas week, I was worried that we might not get the 50 volunteers normally needed. My fears were unfounded.

**Rev. Duane Priest
Faith United Methodist Church, Buffalo, NY**

The IHN program has allowed us to give names to so many more church community members. New people have volunteered to help our guests, and made us more united. Together, we witness Jesus' loving service.

**Fr. Cassian Lewinski
St. Catherine's Newman Center, Salt Lake City, UT**

First Lutheran members have overwhelmingly responded to the Interfaith Hospitality Network Ministry. It has given us an opportunity to live out a corporate faith expression in response to the growing need of homelessness. This hands on opportunity will be a blessing to any congregation who chooses this outreach ministry. It's great to be a part of a solution.

**Dr. Paul R. Peel
First Lutheran Church, Colorado Springs, CO**

This has involved more people than any other program in our church. It has stirred some people who had not been active before, as well as drawn the participation of new members. We're a small church, and it takes about half our congregation to host. People feel, "Here's something that I can do. It's concrete. This is something the Church ought to be doing.

**Rev. Russell Fuller
Memorial Christian Church, Ann Arbor, MI**