

To The Southwest Region Convocation
From : St. Barnabas of the Valley, Cortez

THANK YOU for the \$4,000 grant for 2025 support of Grace's Kitchen --now in its 27th year of serving three meals a week to anyone in need. Please know that your support is also received as direct encouragement for our volunteers.

Here are some of our 2025 successes and challenges:

- We already expect to surpass last year's 15,000 meals by thousands as indicated by new daily records -- up by over 70% (!) in the last few months.
- Our Vestry voted their support with the purchase of a new 8-burner gas range with double full-size ovens --increasing our capacity, efficiency and safety.
- Our dedicated volunteers are challenged, not only with the increase of meals needed, but with the transition of multiple beloved leaders:
 - Rector Doug Bleyle resigned in May and was most active both on the front lines and behind the scenes coordination;
 - Our long time Tuesday lead cook, professional chef and official Food Manager, Michael Hart, is now in hospice care.
 - One of Grace's 'founding mothers' and active volunteer-- Sally Tompkins passed away in June.
- Our volunteer hours per shift have increased slightly, with new volunteers being recruited from our friends, neighbors, 'strangers' in the aisles of Walmart, and a lovely home school group of elementary aged children.
- The Grace's "Advisory" Committee members now actively and increasingly function daily with food and supply ordering, shopping and managing resources.
- Food and supply costs continue to rise.
- Outside sources of support come from walk-in donations and grants from the City of Cortez, several local foundations and churches including the LDS Bishop's Storehouse \$6,000 food credit. City Market food donations via The Care and Share program dwindle with mostly prepared and processed foods and bakery items and only occasional small amounts of meat.
- St. Barnabas parishioners along with community volunteers have raised over \$9,000 in the Soups of Cortez fundraiser and a most successful Silent Art Auction.
- We continue to collaborate and strategize with Hope's Kitchen, The Good Samaritan Food Pantry and The Bridge Shelter recognizing that our challenges are not unique and our successes help us all.

Respectfully submitted,
Victoria Atkins, interim coordinator