

Milesburg Food Pantry



The Milesburg Food Pantry was the first in Centre County. It began in 1987 and has been in continuous operation since that time – 36 years. It started in a small closet in the Presbyterian Church and later, with funds from the Huntingdon Presbytery, three garage bays at the Presbyterian church were converted into the food pantry that is still used today.

The pantry was started as a collaboration between the Milesburg United Methodist Church and the Milesburg Presbyterian Church by two young pastors who were serving these churches at the time. In the beginning, since it was the only food pantry in Centre County, it assisted 90 – 100 households per month. Volunteers from both churches were responsible for distributing the food once a month.

At the present time, there are two teams of volunteers that meet the delivery truck to store the food received, pack boxes for distribution, and work on the distribution day which is the first Tuesday of each month.

The Food Pantry became a member of the Central PA Food Bank which is part of Feeding America. Food is ordered from their satellite location in Williamsport. Donations from many of the organizations in Centre County, along with individual support, help to buy food at a very discounted rate from the Central PA Food Bank.

Other churches, who are not directly involved in the operation, support the food pantry with monthly donations of money. Food drives by the Boy Scouts, Wingate Elementary School, and some individual drives have continued to supply much-needed food.

As other food banks began to open in Centre County, the number of households served by the Milesburg food pantry decreased over time. At this time, it serves about 50 households per month. When Covid struck, the food pantry responded by converting the food distribution into a drive-through, a practice that continues.

One of the interesting facts about the Milesburg food pantry is that we do not receive any State or Federal funds and therefore we can serve people who “fall through the cracks” and may be turned away at other food pantries. They may be in a situation where they make more than the maximum allowed but they are having a temporary setback. We can help them because we have the discretion to look at each situation individually.

We are thankful for all the support that has made it possible for this important ministry to continue all these years. We have seen the Lord work in mysterious ways to keep us going. If you have questions or want information about how you can start a food pantry at your church, we would be happy to offer our experience and advice.