

Created in a church closet more than three decades ago, the Carmel United Methodist Church Missions Food Pantry has grown so much that it has taken over the church parsonage.

For more than 300 families living in Carmel, Ind., the pantry is an important resource each month. And for the past decade, the Meijer *Simply Give* program has supported the pantry in its mission, which has been key to stocking the shelves with high-quality, nutritious food.

“The *Simply Give* program allows our buyers to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as meat, which is what our guests love the most,” said Linda Withrow, Missions Coordinator at Carmel United Methodist Church. “Those are commodities they do not get at most food pantries.”

During the first three months of 2023, the pantry supplied food to more than 4,000 people – nearly double the number during the same time last year. The increasing demand reflects how rising costs overall have disproportionately affected working families. Many of the pantry’s guests now spend as much as 75-80 percent of their income on necessities, such as housing and medical costs, Linda said.

Supported by over \$22,000 from the Meijer *Simply Give* program in 2022, the pantry fed more than 10,000 people and expects to exceed that this year, estimating more than 16,000 people.

As part of an ongoing commitment to invest in our communities, Meijer announced in late April it donated an extra \$1 million to Midwest food pantries that participated in our [Simply Give](#) hunger relief program last year, including the Carmel United Methodist Church Missions Food Pantry. Overall, our *Simply Give* program has generated more than \$80 million for food pantry partners since its 2008 inception.

“The Carmel United Methodist Food Pantry relies heavily on the Meijer *Simply Give* program, as well as other extra gifts that help us feed the working hungry right here in Hamilton County,” Linda wrote in a thank-you letter to Meijer. “Like the Meijer Family, Carmel United Methodist Church cares about our neighbors and we are profoundly grateful for your support.”

Additional assets available online: [\(2\)](#)

<https://meijercommunity.com/2023-07-12-As-Need-Nearly-Doubles,-Simply-Give-Helps-Indiana-Pantry-Feed-its-Neighbors>