

The Atlanta Community Food Bank (ACFB) got its start in the basement of St. Luke's Episcopal Church (Atlanta) in 1979. Today, the organization has a service map which spans 29 counties around the Metro Atlanta area. Its signature annual fundraiser is the [Hunger Walk Run](#) (which is coming up March 15), and the Episcopal Community Foundation has partnered with ACFB on this event for more than 40 years.

As a benefiting partner of Hunger Walk Run, ECF creates an opportunity for Episcopal parishes to expand the reach of this event beyond the ACFB's service map. In recent years, three rural counties where churches in the Diocese of Atlanta partner with local nonprofits have been able to feed hungry Georgians as a result of the Hunger Walk Run. Food ministries in Elbert, Putnam, and Walton counties received [grants from ECF funded by proceeds from the annual ACFB event](#).

The Mustard Seed Effect: Ensuring Resilience in Eatonton

All Angels Episcopal Church (Eatonton) and Putnam Christian Outreach - \$24,000 in 2024

"An ECF grant is like the parable of the mustard seed," said Marty Ray, member of All Angels in Eatonton. "There's so much possibility for growth and more to come."

About 20 to 25 people attend All Angels in Eatonton. They partner with local nonprofit Putnam Christian Outreach (PCO) to fight food insecurity with backpacks full of food for public schoolchildren. When other funding sources dried up, the partnership reached out to ECF for bridge funding.

Not long after the ECF grant, Hurricane Helene closed schools and flooded food banks. The backpack program continued without a glitch.

"Because of the grant, we were able to serve through a hard time," said Ray, an All Angels member since 2000. "It was serendipitous."

The crisis increased awareness of hunger and attracted more dedicated PCO volunteers and donors. The church has started supporting local high school students who work to help their families afford food.

Small Parish, Bold Action: Strengthening SafeHouse Ministries

St. Alban's Episcopal Church (Elberton) and SafeHouse Ministries - \$21,500 in 2023

St. Alban's Elberton is a small parish. About 15 people attend services, and their unwavering commitment to SafeHouse Ministries for over two decades has helped feed people in need.

"SafeHouse enables our congregation to serve those who are underserved and marginalized," said longtime St. Alban's Elberton member Suzanne Moore.

Parishioners first donated pantry staples, then raised funds and kept pitching in. The congregation is "more than willing to always go above whatever we need," said SafeHouse Director Sue Beitzel.

When SafeHouse needed a commercial freezer, St. Alban's Elberton reached out to ECF. The freezer saves food that would otherwise be discarded, including chicken from nearby processing plants and groceries from Walmart.

The grant also spurred St. Alban's Elberton to act boldly. They welcomed [Grace United Methodist Church to share their space](#).

"The ECF grant boosted our confidence as a parish," said priest-in-charge Rev. Reid Hamilton. "Despite our small size, we are able to have an impact that benefits the whole community."

Bridging the Gap: Mobilizing for Schoolchildren in Monroe

St. Alban's Episcopal Church (Monroe) - \$30,000 in 2025

A third of the 93 parishioners at St. Alban's Monroe volunteer with Faith in Serving Humanity (FISH), an outreach ministry that the parish helped start in 1991.

"Historically in Walton county there's been a very strong separation between the poorer parts and the wealthier parts; we see ourselves as trying to bridge that gap," said Rev. Rich Bardusch, priest-in-charge for the congregation. "It's direct intervention through feeding."

The volunteers at St. Alban's Monroe make sandwiches, pack lunches, load them into an aging van, and distribute them to 300 schoolchildren every weekday in the summer. In 2025, the volunteers wanted to double the route with a newer, more reliable vehicle. ECF's grant challenged the parish to raise half the cost.

ECF's grant provided "a huge morale boost," Bardusch said. "With 70 households pledging, we couldn't have raised \$65,000 on our own. It was definitely a successful campaign for something they could not have done on their own."

The multiplier effect did not surprise him: "You know Jesus said, 'Where two or three are gathered up there'? Jesus is what makes the two or three able to do the work of 10."



Michelle Hiskey (she/her) is an experienced writer and journalist whose work has appeared in the New York Times, Washington Post and AJC, and earned four Pulitzer Prize nominations. She ghostwrote two business books related to negotiation strategies, and coaches writers including Emory faculty. Michelle is a member at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church.

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