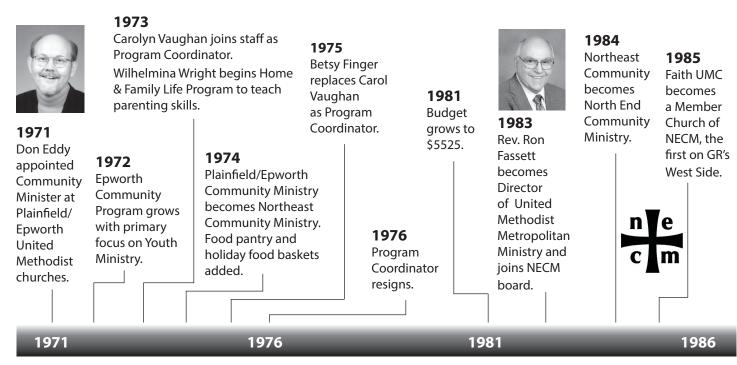


Highlights of 50 years of ministry



Highlights of 50 years of ministry



2000

NECM's lobby given facelift with new paint and chairs. Board of Directors facilitates restructuring meetings with Naomi García from the United Methodist West Michigan Conference Center.

Second Sunday School room acquired in the basement from Plainfield UMC for two more offices.

Laura Castle and Paula Shelner establish the "Celebrate Back to School" program providing new clothing, shoes, underwear, socks, school supplies, backpacks, and haircut vouchers for children.

Budget grows to more than \$100,000 for the first time and Laura Castle becomes full-time.

2001

Pre-employment

training program

launched by the

Director to prepare

clients to apply for

jobs in the Creston

neighborhood and

meeting held to tell

NECM's story and invite

new churches to join

beyond. Special

the NECM Board.

1986

Laura Castle replaces Nichea Guy as NECM Director. NECM office located off the sanctuary in a small room with no heat, phone or typewriter.

1991

Laura Castle works with Plainfield UMC to expand space for NECM and acquires a Sunday School room in the church basement. A volunteer puts in a wall and door to make two offices out of the room. The small food pantry was in a small basement closet for many years.

NECM asked to become an Access (All County Churches Emergency Support Systems) Key Food Pantry.

1987 **NECM** serves 35-40 families per month with food.

1988 Income surpasses \$20,000 for first time.

1997

Celebratory event for NECM's 25th anniversary takes place. NECM joins with Grand Rapids NW to operate citywide food drive for NE side. (Eventually Grand Rapids SE and SW join, renamed County Wide Food Drive.)

1994

The Jane Woodbridge Memorial Fund established to honor former NECM volunteer.

1992

Sue Harrington serves as Interim Director during Laura Castle's maternity leave.

1993

NECM's first quarterly newsletter published by Laura Castle.

1995

New Skills for Living and Single Parenting classes launched by the Director.



1999

Paula Shelner hired as first additional staff person as the Volunteer Coordinator. **Emergency fund** established. George Mandigo joins the Board representing North Park Presbyterian Church.



2002

2003

First administrative assistant is hired, Linda Richardson. Clothing Bank is closed by Laura Castle and is turned into a "Client Choice Food Pantry," with major help from Diane Bouwknegt. NECM's kitchen is painted and new countertops and sinks are installed.

A memorial is established in honor of Jean Ranck, former volunteer and board

Laura Castle and Rev. Chuck Van Lente write grant for "Faith in Action" to Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to provide a program for senior citizens to remain independent in their homes. The \$30,000 grant was approved to develop the "Caring Connections" program.

New computer program from Access of West Michigan installed, connecting 11 area food pantries.

Laura Castle is encouraged by Rev. Neil Davis (former pastor of Plainfield UMC at the time) to take a look at the Supper House program in Muskegon Heights.

2005

NE Supper House program through NECM established by the Director and she puts together a committee to move the program forward and hire its first coordinator, Jessica Campbell. 50 people are served its first night. The program eventually provides meals both Tuesday and Thursday evenings and serves 260 people per week.

George Mandigo becomes the **NECM Board President, following** Linda Powrie (who served for 10 years).

NECM extends its reach to become a newly formed "Ecumenical Ministry" and Aberdeen Reformed, Faith Lutheran, North Park Presbyterian and St. Andrews Episcopal churches join NECM in partnership with the 4 original churches, Aldersgate, Faith, Northlawn, and Plainfield UMCs. Oakview Community, Berkley Hills, Second Congregational, St. Luke's Lutheran, Immanuel Lutheran and Third Reformed churches are other Partner Churches. Frontline Church joins for a few years, as well.

A Mobile Food Pantry is established at Leonard Terrace Apartments (part of the Grand Rapids Housing Commission serving Senior Citizens) by Laura Castle, with plans for the food pantry to serve up to 125 residents.

An annual fundraiser dinner and live/silent auction established to help support NECM. NECM becomes a Partnering Pantry with Spectrum Health "NOW." **Nutritional options** for wellness program provide diabetic-friendly foods to help clients manage diabetes. Access of West Michigan eventually took over the program up until 2019.

2006

NECM partners with Calvin College social work students. Community Development class, and SIFE (Students in Free Enterprise), as well as Calvin College and Grand **Rapids Community** College nursing students, to provide blood pressure and blood sugar screenings for NECM clients.

2007

NECM Board works with Professor Dana Phillips, Carnegie Mellon University, and leader with "Faith In Action/Robert Wood Johnson" to facilitate growth and development of the ministry of NECM.

2012

Irene Gager hired as the first Program Coordinator of "NOW" program.

2008

NECM begins working with MSU Extension Services to help clients select healthy foods in food pantry.

2019

NECM's wood floors totally refurbished and surfaced. New flooring installed in the hallway, kitchen and bathrooms. New sinks put in bathrooms. Lobby area and hallway spruced up with a fresh coat of paint.

NECM partners with Macy's Department Store at Woodland Mall in Grand Rapids to promote their "Bag Hunger" program, where donations of food and financial support are garnered. "Scan Hunger" also gives opportunity for customers to round up their purchase to support NECM. Staff from Macy's comes to NECM to do volunteer work during the promotion.

2020

COVID-19 strikes and NECM is forced to temporarily close NE Supper House and the food pantry for clients. Pre-packed bags of food provided at the door. Holiday baskets distributed by NECM instead of coordinating with churches and individuals.

NOW Program with Access of West Michigan comes to an end and a Diabetic Food Pantry is created by Laura Castle with the help of Grand Valley State University intern Adam Engwis. First diabetic food pantry coordinator is hired.

2021

Client Choice Food Pantry reopens to regular distribution for clients. NE Supper House reopens in July.

Dairy products, including milk, eggs, cheese, butter and milk) added to the Client Choice Food Pantry.

NECM celebrates 50 years!!!

1991 1996 2001 2006 2011 2016 2021 1986