

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Thomas Christell

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Central Illinois Charities Oral History project

Interview # CIC-A-L-2019-010

Pastor Thomas (Tom) Christell, pastor at Grace Lutheran Church in Springfield who also oversees the Grace Food Pantry, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Central Illinois Charities* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Feb 27, 2019 Location: Grace Lutheran Church, Springfield, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Linda Rice, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 0:56 / 0.93 hrs

Transcript
being processed

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on March 16, 2020.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Tom Christell, *Central Illinois Charities*, CIC-A-L-2019-010

Biographical Information/Overview of Interview: In 1990 Thomas (Tom) Christell became pastor at Grace Lutheran Church, an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) congregation located in downtown Springfield, Illinois. At the time he arrived, the Grace Food Pantry had already been in existence for many years.

Grace Food Pantry, a non-profit organization, was originally established in the late 1940s using vouchers to fill a need to feed lower income families in Sangamon County. When restaurants quit accepting vouchers, parishioners brought cans of food to give out. The first written account of the food pantry as it is today is 1974. The pantry is totally staffed by volunteers. Funding comes through the generosity of donations, food drives and community groups. The food pantry, located in the basement of Grace Lutheran, uses the Central Illinois Food Bank for the majority of its food supplies, but also receives food donations and purchases from local food stores. At the time of the interview, the food pantry was serving 15,000 people per year.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Grace Food Pantry; Pastor Thomas Christell; Central Illinois Food Pantry; Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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