

## Laundry Love Annual Report 2018

Laundry Love is a new ministry at Episcopal Church of the Holy Communion that began in the spring of 2017. It partners with a national organization that began in California, and it “*seeks to bring economic relief by giving the individual or family the option to redirect funds toward food, medical, gas or transportation costs as well as school supplies and other basic, everyday necessities*” (laundrylove.org). In short, on the third Tuesday of every month volunteers from Holy Communion set up shop at Classic Coin Laundry on Balson Ave. and offer to do up to 5 loads of washing and drying for any customer who asks. The vestry helped us initiate this mission by providing us with some funds from the Outreach budget.

The small group of parishioners who gathered under the guidance of the Rev. Mike Angell in the spring spent their time visiting different laundromats in the University City area to do our own laundry and gather information about costs of loads, space for us to set up check-in stations and food tables, and access to customers who would benefit the most from our service. Karen Payne spoke to managers to get a better sense of who came to the laundromats and how open owners were to us setting up our ministry. She also spent an evening with a Laundry Love operation already up and running in St. Charles County for suggestions on how to run a successful session. After two trial runs at Classic Coin, which warmly welcomed our mission, the small committee opened up to Holy Communion volunteers and began in earnest in September.

We currently have 38 parishioners on our volunteer list. The monthly events are coordinated by **Mary Duba**, **Lisa Heaner**, and **Julie Farrar**, but a team that averages 15 volunteers shows up each event to put the quarters in machines, pour detergent, set up the pizza table, help carry laundry from cars, keep the children occupied with games and coloring, or just talk to our University City neighbors to learn more about them. We’ve had from 7 to 17 customers sign in during an evening, which means up to 70 loads of laundry on a busy night. One busy night of laundry plus pizza can cost up to \$100.

This mission has been well received by the community. Because of [a story that appeared in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#), a church in Soulard recently consulted with us about how to begin its own program. On one Tuesday evening a parent showed up who didn’t know about Laundry Love and said “bless you” because she was using her last \$5 to give her kids clean clothes. That’s how we know this service is needed. As 2018 progresses we will work more on promoting it to a wider audience in the U City area (many customers just see the poster at the laundromat) and discussing ways to build up our laundry fund. If anyone at Holy Communion is free on the third Tuesday of the month and would like to be added to the e-mail list, just let any of the Laundry Love leaders know. It’s a service that takes no skill and little time, but leaves a large feeling of accomplishment. In addition, if you know of anyone who could benefit from our service, give them one of the small postcards you can find around the church or just direct them to Classic Coin on Balson the third Tuesday of the month.