



...s of the lockdown which now serves around 100 people a week, and is

The food bank works as part of a mutual aid group for the area and is supported by both church and non-church volunteers. While closed for worship, the church building is acting as a temporary facility for supplies, with parcels delivered on foot, bicycles, vans and cars to homes and also left for collection in the lobby outside the main doors of the church. The church is also helping with weekend cover for the borough-wide referral system for the most vulnerable, organised by the local council, overseeing food deliveries and helping with requests such as picking up and delivering prescriptions. The church runs a community cafe and elders lunch club which provided meals before the lockdown. The lunch club and café are suspended during the pandemic. Its well equipped kitchen, fridges and freezers along with its connection to other voluntary groups in the area have allowed it to distribute large donations of fresh food from a number of suppliers, including the supermarkets and City Harvest, the surplus food charity.

"There are around 30 church run food banks operating in Newham - some long established through The Trussell Trust, but many like ours, just popping up to respond to the increasing needs of our community." said Ascension Church Vicar Dave Chesney.

"We see this as an opportunity to share the message of the gospel,"

"People ask me 'when this is over, are you going to go back to normal?' – my answer is 'no, we are not' – we are going back to a new normal where people are more appreciative of each other, more loving of each other and recognise the needs of each other."

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