

City ministry to the poor and vulnerable

Love Southend December 2025 prayer guide

Isaiah 58: 6, 7, 9b,10

“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:
to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?
Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—
when you see the naked, to clothe them,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?
“If you do away with the yoke of oppression,
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,
and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,
then your light will rise in the darkness,
and your night will become like the noonday.

Southend Foodbank - <https://southend.foodbank.org.uk/>

A good news story: <https://youtu.be/R8gm9wif6k>

Current donation priorities:

- Instant mashed potato; Long-life milk; Pasta sauce; Rice sachets (microwavable)
- Tinned custard; Tinned fish; Tinned fruit; Tinned hot dogs; Tinned vegetables
- Tinned minced beef; Tinned ham; Biscuits; Tea bags; Something nice for Christmas

Prayer priorities:

- demand for support has been consistently outstripping donations of food and cash – additional resources are needed
- prayer for Natasha Copus and trustees as they face a challenging start to the New Year. We are going through organisational challenges and lots of change at the foodbank. Can we please have prayer for staff, volunteers and all the guests who come to foodbank. Christmas can be a very difficult time for people struggling financially and we want to lift them up.

Southend City Baptist Church Winter Evening Drop-in

<http://57west.org.uk/>

A good news story:

A gentleman called into an SCBC drop-in morning (Tues – Fri). He had been living in very poor housing and had a poor landlord. The conditions deteriorated to the point he felt he would be better off on the streets. At the drop-in he felt he was listened to, heard and supported. He was homeless for 28 weeks but very recently he moved into a new flat.

Not such good news:

A winter night shelter for 2025-26?

Unfortunately, not enough people volunteered, and Council funding wasn't made available until the last minute. This meant that we weren't able to get sufficient beds and food to run the night shelter.

So, for 2026 we are trying to get an early start on funds and volunteers so that we can run the winter night shelter next year.

A winter evening drop-in for this year?

The desire is to provide a safe, warm place from 5pm – midnight Thurs – Sun with hot food, a drink and company – or for a nap! Unfortunately, we have too few volunteers to provide an evening drop-in for the rough sleepers in Southend at the moment.

Prayer priorities:

- for people to offer their time, so that we can provide the evening drop-in service.
- for next winter’s night shelter is also a priority
 - for SCBC minister Pam Ring who will be attending a bid-writing course in January (before taking maternity leave)
 - for a successful bid and early financial commitment from the Council
 - for successful bids to other fund-providers
 - for sufficient volunteers

These are the things we, as a community, are praying about most. We would be extremely grateful for any, and all prayers and any practical assistance that may be available.

Additional information – HARP have agreed, with funding from the Council, to provide a night shelter of 15 beds for 12 weeks this winter.

St Vincent's Centre, Southend-on-Sea - <https://svp.org.uk/st-vincents-southend>

St Vincent's Centre, Southend-on-Sea is a Community Support Project of the [St Vincent de Paul Society \(England and Wales\)](#) which supports vulnerable people in the local area.

We offer a friendly, non-judgemental and unique “wrap around” service tailored to the needs of the individual. We provide foodbank services, hot meals, in and out reach support, household items and clothing, counselling, dementia support and a befriending service. We also signpost our service users to specialist organisations that we partner with in the local community.



Prayer priorities:

- sufficient funding, donations and volunteers
- positive outcomes for those supported

Southend Vineyard – The Storehouse <https://www.southendvineyard.org.uk/storehouse/>

A few things to be thankful for:

- Our rough sleepers' session every Tuesday has taken off with up to 20 people coming to us for a cooked breakfast, showers, homeless bag, support, care and advice from the Council's rough sleeper workers.
- We continue to see relationships with other partners developing, including HARP and donations from SCBC.
- Victoria shopping centre has made us charity of the year for 2026. It is exciting, with opportunities this affords us.
- Marie, Storehouse manager, has been instrumental in housing two of the homeless who come to our sessions this month, in their own flats. The excitement on their faces was amazing.
- There is a great sense of community among the guests
- Staff and volunteers are great. They are often ex service users.
- We are gradually seeing more people from the Storehouse, connecting with Southend Vineyard, events and services.

Key facts:

- 6 sessions a week including a ladies' only session
- Approximately 20 new referrals every month
- We have an average of 305 people every week
- Between 10 to 30 homeless people turn up at the homeless drop-in
- We give out on average 1,125 food items, plus bread and vegetables, and any other free items every week.
- One day recently 173 people came for support
- There is an increase in the number of rough sleepers
- We have a crisis in donations and have reduced our offer from 8 to 5 items

Prayer points:

- We continue to pray for more provisions and finances to both pay for the current ministry, but to develop it in line with God's purposes for the future
- Wisdom in knowing how to impact individuals and families in the long run. A number of ideas are being explored and changes put in place.
- The Christmas dinners are on Monday 15th December and Friday 19th December (120 people to 3 course meal, waitress service and the St. Vincent's choir). Pray for God's peace and the good news to be impacting people's lives and that great fun is had.
- Our Storehouse Christmas service on Thursday 18th, that people will come and hear the good news and encounter love, compassion and peace.
- Carol service is on Sunday 21st December in Warrior Square. That planning permission is granted, and we see the kingdom breaking in.