

Giving part of Thanksgiving

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
Wednesday, 25 November 2009 22:45 -



“Give and it shall be given to you; good measure pressed down and shaken together; and running over shall men given unto your bosom.”

—*Luke 6:38*

The essence of giving is captured in this Bible scripture as quoted by Janice Viter and brother-in-law the Rev. Larry Viter, both of Faith Chapel.

They, other Faith Chapel Church congregationalists and many community volunteers are gearing up for the fifth annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner Thursday.

“The reward you get is the satisfaction of knowing that you’ve helped somebody,” said Larry as the aroma of roasted turkey wafted throughout the home he shares with wife Pam.

“It’s giving that goes along with thankfulness.”

Larry said the idea for the free holiday dinner started six years ago around the Viter dinner table.

“We decided we ought to make Thanksgiving for other people instead of ourselves,” he said.

The next year, members from Faith Chapel and some people from the community hosted a dinner at the church on the fourth Thursday of November.

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“It’s for anyone who doesn’t have a place to go or family to meet with,” he said. “Or for people who want to come visit with others just to get together.”

FREE THANKSGIVING DINNER

When: Thursday, Nov. 26, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.,

Where: First Methodist Church, 1401 Lake Ave.

What: Free Thanksgiving to dinner for anyone. For dinner to be delivered to a home or business, call 537-3812 or 537-7518.

After two years, Faith Chapel was too small for the gathering which grew to 120 last year.

The dinner was at the Senior Center the next year and at First United Methodist last year as it will be again in 2009.

Planning begins the end of October, Janice said, with the circulation of sign-up sheets for food preparers and the creation of flyers posted at the truck stop and motels.

Last year, Larry said a family traveling to New York saw the flyer and attended the dinner.

“We not only helped them with just dinner but also with travel expenses to get them to where they were going,” he said.

Food preparation takes place in volunteers’ homes with some in charge of roasting turkey or ham and others making mashed or sweet potato dishes, green bean or corn recipes, salads,

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dessert and rolls.

Food is taken to the meal location before the dinner.

In addition to serving a sit-down dinner, volunteers also deliver holiday fare to anyone working on Thanksgiving or to people in their homes.

Larry said there's at least one person from every church in town that serves and/or provides food.

Monetary donations are also accepted to help make the meal possible.

Janice said she enjoys preparing and serving the dinner because it's fun. She's become reacquainted with classmates she hasn't seen in years who attend.

"It's also good to be able to give to others," she said. "You receive while you're there—it's a two-way thing."

Larry described the meal as a ministry.

"We do a number of community things and we enjoy doing it," he said.

Besides receiving from giving, Larry said another reward has been to see the dinner grow into a community project.

"It's really developed into that," he said.

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