

Fountain City Episcopal church's labor of love for the hungry

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By Mike Steely

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One recent Saturday morning more than 40 people went to the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd for a special event. They were volunteering to help Operation Inasmuch, Inc., to assemble 20,000 pasta and tomato sauce packets for Second Harvest.

Rev. Dorrie Pratt welcomed the volunteers with a prayer and David Crocker, founder of Operation Inasmuch, spoke to the crowd and instructed them how to measure, package and seal the meals. Pratt's prayer included the message that "sending it out to those in need so they all know they are loved and fed by you" she said, adding "in the name of Jesus."

“We work with churches, other organizations, companies and schools to package 300,000 to 400,000 meals each year,” Crocker told The Focus. Each package being prepared by the volunteers can feed up to six people.

Assembly of the food packages began at 9 a.m. and volunteers continued to arrive to help throughout the morning. Casey Collins, a Good Shepherd member, organized the event. Ruth Anne Hanahan reached out to The Focus to attend the event.

John Daugherty, executive director of Inasmuch, said the food, packets, and boxes are all supplied by Meals of Hope. He added that Inasmuch provided the scales to weight the food and the plastic bag sealer. The process begins with the volunteers using hand cleaner, putting on plastic gloves and hairnets, and assembling on both sides of each table.

After her prayer Rev. Pratt watched Crocker give the instructions to the volunteers and then she put on gloves and a hairnet and joined in the assembly process.

“We do international and domestic meals and have supplied food to 50 orphanages in Guatemala. The food today will go to Second Harvest for their distribution,” Daugherty said, adding, “We’re packaging macaroni, flour and pasta sauce packages,”

“In our international packages we use rice, dried vegetables and a vitamin pack,” he said.

Crocker said the food packages go to Second Harvest where food pantries and other organizations from a nine county area come and receive food.

“You are really helping to feed people not just in Knox County but in the area around us as well,” he said.

Operation Inasmuch is a local faith-based nonprofit that helps to equip churches to serve their communities. The food packaging is a special project. “Inasmuch” is based on the Mathew 25:40 which says “And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say to you, Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me.”

More information is available at “operationinasmuch.org” or you can reach John Daugherty at (865) 951-2511. You may contact the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd at “goodshepherdknoxville.org” or call the church at (865) 687-9420.



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