

# News From Terre Haute, Indiana

*November 23, 2012*

## Church continues tradition of delivering Thanksgiving dinner

### Hundreds served meals on Thursday

*Brian Bryce*

**The Tribune-Star**

TERRE HAUTE — Families' traditions of giving swirled about gravy and mashed potatoes Thursday, as volunteers served meals to hundreds throughout town.

Thanksgiving Day dinner was under way early inside St. Patrick Church on Poplar Street. Preparations were ongoing throughout the morning and volunteers began delivering meals at 11 a.m. Parishioner Teresa Shaffer said for her family, the service is a tradition in its own right.

“Actually, I’ve been doing this since I was a little girl,” she said inside the church school’s cafeteria.

Organized by her father, Joe Bauer, and others about 35 years ago, the annual event was picked up by her sister, Ruthmarie Bauer Newport, when the older generation passed. After her sister’s death, the event was named in her honor, and continues to be organized by her surviving husband, Joe Newport, Shaffer explained.

Each year, parishioners serve a Thanksgiving Day meal to anyone who comes through the doors, and they deliver throughout the community to agencies such as the sheriff’s and fire departments. By 11:30 a.m., the team had dispatched more than 500 meals via drivers.

“A little over 900 total,” Shaffer said of the expected count for the day.

People come to the church on Thanksgiving for a number of reasons, she said. Some are elderly and don’t have family in town, and others have simply been coming so long it’s just part of the holiday.

“We have people who come back every year,” she said.

For her mother, Norma Bauer, that’s part of the fun.

“I like meeting everybody,” she said from her spot at a welcome desk. “I work at the soup kitchen too, so I know a lot of them.”

Having her own children and grandchildren involved in the day makes it special as well, she remarked.

The family of Eddie Barrera seemed happy enough, working on turkey and stuffing. Barrera’s 3-year-old son, William, liked the cranberry sauce, he noted. Each year he also brings his grandmother, Beverly

Crawford, for the event at church.

“It’s a tradition,” he said.

On the city’s north side, the Bethany House’s kitchen was full of cooks and diners alike. The facility operated by Terre Haute Catholic Charities on Locust Street had 17 volunteers from as far away as Paris, Ill., Thursday afternoon. Bethany Thompson estimated the group would serve upwards of 60 meals there.

“Everybody’s giving thanks and trying to bless as many people as possible,” she said inside the kitchen, amid butternut squash and pumpkin pie.

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