

# Redeemer to host Thanksgiving for homeless and needy

By **JANET DOVIDIO**  
The Independent

The congregation at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Woodstock is preparing for its ninth annual Thanksgiving Dinner, which will be served at the church to homeless and needy people from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Thanksgiving Day. The meal is also served to the firefighters from all four Woodstock stations and to shut-in residents of the community.

The effort is chaired by Joe and Charlotte Scholpp and Arne Olson from Redeemer and Linda and Steve Mayer from Fellowship of Faith Lutheran Church, McHenry.

The dinner is Redeemer's way of thanking the firefighters for their service. At the same time, dinner guests will be homeless people who have stayed at PADS shelters and shut-in residents referred by the Senior Care Volunteer Network, Walden Oaks and the Salvation Army. Anyone coming through the doors Thanksgiving Day will be served a complete dinner until the food runs out.

Dedicated volunteers will drive the

meals to shut-ins whose referrals are received by Saturday, Nov. 22.

Nearly all of the food will be donated by generous individuals and local businesses, including Panera Bread, White Hen Pantry and Mary and Antonio Wict of Isabel's Restaurant. Isabel's is generous through the year for many Redeemer events. Any leftover unopened food will be donated to the Woodstock Food Pantry.

The menu changes from year to year.

"We cook whatever God brings in our doors," said Charlotte Scholpp. "We have sweet potatoes, squash, dressing, mashed potatoes, green bean casserole, corn soufflé, rolls and pies."

Arne Olson oversees the preparation of 18 to 22 turkeys each year. He starts cooking at Redeemer Monday and finishes by Wednesday. The turkeys are then stored in several freezers until Thanksgiving. One of his secrets is cutting each turkey in half, which considerably shortens the cooking time.

"I'm very excited about the Thanksgiving dinner outreach," said the Rev. Tom Rogers of Redeemer. "It is incredible to watch it unfold each year. The best part of this ministry is that it fits in so well with our other offerings, such as the Wednesday night emergency homeless shelter and the Thursday daytime homeless program."

"Our volunteers come from every denomination in the area, including Lutheran, Catholic, Jewish and non-denominational," added Charlotte Scholpp. "The homeless deserve to have a home-cooked meal as much as anyone else."

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*News of recognitions and milestones can be sent to Janet Dovidio at [fetjetjd@aol.com](mailto:fetjetjd@aol.com).*