

St. MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Stewardship 2010

This year's theme for stewardship is *“Using the gifts God has given us....to do the work He is calling us to do.”* This is the fifth in a series of stories about how we, at St. Mary's, are living into this theme.

In July we wrote about our financial and volunteer support of Open Door Ministries. Today we expand on the role that we all play in St. Mary's effort to help our neighbors in need. Through Sunday, August 29th, we have the opportunity to participate in the **Fill the Bus** food collection. The food drive is done in participation with the Main Street Coalition – a joint effort among First United Methodist, First Baptist, First Presbyterian, and St. Mary's. (We were first, too!) Each of us sponsors a quarterly drive to fill local food pantries. What we're invited to bring to the containers in the vestibule of the parish hall varies. This time we are asked to donate soup and crackers, dried or canned fruit, dried or canned beans, and rice. If you're at the store and can't remember St. Mary's “assignment” don't despair – any non-perishable food items are welcomed. A volunteer at First Presbyterian monitors the needs of 3 different pantries – Open Door Ministries, West End Ministries, and Ward Street Mission to see who needs what. Hunger is not a seasonal condition and our participation with the Coalition helps to keep shelves stocked year round.

For as long as I can remember there has been a basket in the vestibule, on the right just as you enter the church from the courtyard, with a sign marked “Tuna.” Do you know why? St. Mary's is the “Tuna Church” for Open Door Ministries. As you may recall from that July story, ODM provides 2 hot meals a day for 85- 100 men, women, and children. Once a month they serve tuna from St. Mary's. If we have not collected enough cans to feed that large number of people, tuna is purchased with money from the Matthew 25:40 (our outreach committee) budget. You are invited to join the parishioners who have faithfully contributed to the basket over the years.

On an “as needed” basis, St. Mary's provides meals and other assistance to homeless families in support of the work of the Guilford County Interfaith Hospitality Network.

In June families from St. Mary's hosted "picnics." They delivered "invitation peach baskets" to their guests who were asked to fill them with non-perishable food items. Hosts provided the meal and were encouraged to invite people from outside of St. Mary's hoping that attendees would take this idea to their churches and organizations. If you were in church the Sunday the contributions were blessed, you saw what an innovative idea can accomplish – 60 baskets filled to overflowing with more than 1,000 items that were sorted and loaded with the help of the EYC and our Latino/Latina Scout troops.

Surely, feeding the hungry is at the core of Christian stewardship. Want to help sort/deliver **Fill the Bus** donations? Contact Paul Siceloff at paul-siceloff@triad.rr.com. Want to know more about the **Interfaith Hospitality Network**? Contact Tim Yates at Tim.Yates@lfg.com.

The Stewardship Steering Committee

These stories are archived on the church's website:
www.stmarysepisc.org. Click the Stewardship link.