



Contributed by St. John the Apostle Catholic Church

and volunteers of St. John the Apostle Catholic Church help cook and serve meals to those who attended last year's Thanksgiving feast.

# Church provides free meals to all

St. John the Apostle Catholic Church gives out full Thanksgiving meals to people who are hungry or just in need of the company on Nov. 16

By Sarah Mitts  
The Clackamas Print

re homemade turkey, stuffing, dessert and the fixings on Thanksgiving. Anyone interested? Whether you're alone or want to bring family, there's a place for you at the table. This Thanksgiving, St. John the Apostle Catholic Church in Oregon City will bring people from different walks of life together for a free hearty meal and give thanks for the holiday. The church will host its 16th annual Thanksgiving dinner on Thursday, Nov. 18, from noon to 3 p.m. to provide community and companionship for people alone on Thanksgiving. Volunteers will pass out care packages and open up their clothes closet to those in need.

The dinner is a public event and everyone in need of Thanksgiving sharing is welcome, from singles to couples, homeless to employed, religious to non-religious, natives to newcomers.

The meal has never been just for the "needy," said Cathy Leeper, church secretary and organizer for the event. "It's for those who are single or the elderly who don't have children nearby or who aren't willing to travel. There are lots of transplants in the area who have no other family, and it's important they have some place to go."

The event is not designed to promote the church but to help the community during the holiday season, according to Leeper.

This isn't about the people who don't have money to come," event chair Laura Krane said. "It's also about the people who want the community because Thanksgiving is also about coming together and sharing thanks with your community."

Krane made an effort to translate the event into Spanish last year, which attracted a number of seasonal farm workers and families from the area. This year the flyer was in Russian as well. People who don't have a car can easily take a TriMet bus to get to the dinner, which stops right in front of the church.

More than 50 volunteers from the church and community join forces to help organize the event, which reaches more than 400 people thanks to a partnership with Oregon City Meals on Wheels. In addition to providing a dinner to 200 to 300 drop-ins at the church, they prepare meals in their kitchen for Meals on Wheels to pick up and drop off to more than 100 elderly throughout Clackamas County. Care packages with non-perishables and a clothing closet of free items will be available for those in need as well, thanks to help from the church's youth group and Cub Scouts.

The church has a long history of service and focuses on serving the community, not pushing their religion.

"My outlook on faith is to try to treat people well and show my love of God through my actions," said Krane, who helps manage the church's Cub Scouts as well.

The church continues to give year round through a community food bank they offer every Thursday and ongoing support to a sister parish in Honduras.

Krane and her team are working hard to spread the word about the free dinner and want to extend the invite to Clackamas students.

"We really want to serve as many people as possible," she commented, "I'm hoping that next year we can expand it to hospice patients through Providence Willamette Falls Medical Center."

If you want to be served a real, full-course Thanksgiving dinner and share a sense of community with your neighbors, St. John the Apostle Catholic Church in Oregon City is the place to be.

"Free dinner? I'm there," said student Matthew Becker when he heard about the event.

For more information, contact the church at 503-742-8200.

**What:** Free Thanksgiving Dinner

**When:** Thursday Nov. 25

Noon - 3 p.m.

**Where:** St. John the Apostle Catholic Church

417 Washington St., Oregon City

## Cave helps students

By Brian Baldwin  
Associate News Editor

The cold air escapes as the door closes behind you, forcing your eyes to adjust to the darkness. As you are fumbling around for a flashlight or light switch, you see it: resting on a hanger is the shirt you need. But it won't be easy, as you realize that you have stumbled into the Cougar Cave.

Reopening at the start of November, the Cougar Cave is a student resource for those in need of canned or non-perishable food items, hygiene products or clothes.

Initially the Cougar Cave started as the Clothes Closet, a student resource where they could go to get business clothes for job interviews should they not have their own, according to Sage Losh, public affairs officer for the Associated Student Government.

ASG decided to expand the Clothes Closet after they saw a growing trend of everyday clothing item and canned food donations. Renaming it the Cougar Cave was a way for them to "spice it up" for students to make it seem less

of a hand-out and more of a resource.

"We're changing the way we are advertising and really opening it up to students. We're going to host some grand opening activities so they can come into the Cougar Cave and see all that we have to offer," said Losh.

The Cave gets most of its items through donations from students and staff and is still sending donation requests to local businesses and companies.

"Instead of taking their clothing items and food items to Goodwill or food banks, they'll bring them here," said Losh.

ASG will accept any donation at their offices in the Bill Brod Community Center but they will filter through them for quality, cleanliness and purity. Any clothing not selected will be donated to local non-profit organizations.

For more information about the Cave or what items are needed, contact the ASG office at 503-594-3040. The Cougar Cave is open on Mondays 1-2 p.m., Tuesdays 2-3 p.m., Wednesdays 11 a.m.-noon, Thursdays 2-3 p.m. and Fridays 1-2 p.m.



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Join us for an information session:

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Register for this free event at  
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Happy Veterans Day and happy birthday to the United States Marine Corps!



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