

Winter Shelter Part 2, St. Mark's is Blessed Again

by Kevin Jenkins

St. Mark's United Methodist Church took its second turn this season hosting and feeding homeless guests in MacMurdo Hall. This time we had between 70 and 96 individuals each night from Sunday, February 27 through Friday morning, March 4.

The program was a great success because of the generosity of the people and friends of St. Mark's UMC. Your

contribution, together with the others we received in the days before and during the event, allowed the church to feed all of our guests, provide them with



fresh socks, as well as make them feel most welcomed. More than 250 pairs of socks were distributed. We needed 42 dozen eggs and received over 80 dozen. We needed 30 pounds of spaghetti but took in 45 pounds. Roughly 200 gallons of milk and juice were required but close to 280 gallons came into the church. The surplus food was used to help feed the Family Promise guests the following week and to restock our own Food Closet (which is now open each Tuesday and Thursday from 1:00 to 3:00pm).

Over eighty people volunteered during the week to greet guests, prepare and serve meals, wash feet, play games, work on craft projects, distribute reading materials and, most importantly, to provide



a "ministry of presence." Many of the volunteers had only signed up for one night, but were so moved they returned for additional nights. The guests were visited with and

listened to as children of God, as our brothers and sisters in Christ.

I have asked some of the volunteers to share their stories and experiences. Here are a few:

"I met a young man named Vernon. I tripped while carrying some water and he saved me from hitting the floor. From that time on he was anxious to help. He said it was hard for him to watch all the volunteers work so hard and not help. We talked while I washed his feet. He said he had been kicked out of high school in Rio Linda when he was younger but is now trying to turn his life around. He found the passage in the Bible about Jesus washing

feet and was excited about reading it to us. He asked Joanna and me to pray with him. This morning he wanted to pray with me again. It was a very moving experience." Sally



"Not all of the homeless are hungry for food - some are hungry for friendship, for someone to care, for a short while anyway. It's so much harder to just spend time with someone you don't know very well, who comes from a very different background, than it is to just write a check, but it's also that much more rewarding. I feel blessed to have met Richard, and the many others at the shelter who shared their stories with me. I told him if I ever saw him walking around downtown (where I live) that I would say hi, though I don't think he believed me. But even if I never see him again, I'll keep him in my prayers." Kelsey

"There is one thing that stood out for me though. Through conversation with a few of our guests I discovered that we had a few young adults with us that had recently returned from serving our country over seas. This breaks my heart. I feel honored and blessed to have

washed the feet of a few of our military veterans both old and young. I also feel blessed to finally belong to a church family that LOVES unconditionally." Blythe



"This experience was, I feel, perhaps more beneficial, more rewarding for me than for the people we served. Their stories are so diverse, as are their backgrounds; they are truly interesting and worthy people, many in situations not of their own design." Joanna

"Another benefit to volunteering is that I became better acquainted with other members of St. Mark's." Pat

"I was working the book counter when I volunteered and was surprised at the number and depth of conversation I had with the folks regarding books and magazines. Many are well-read and held the books as if treasures of great value (as they are) and were very happy with the idea that they could take one with them.

I found I had quite a bit in common with the homeless. There but for the grace of God go I but at least I'd have interesting people to talk to." Ron

United Methodist Women Save the Date



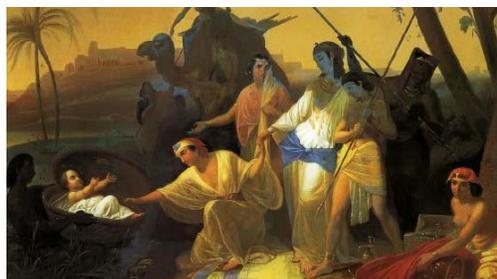
St. Mark's United Methodist Women cordially invite you to our Spring Event: *Put on your Dancing Shoes*. Come to this UMW fundraiser, to enjoy a delicious brunch and be entertained by dancers. The program will present a variety of dance numbers featuring the popular *Hats and Taps* troupe, as well as our own St. Mark's talent. It will be



a lively and a fun show for all ages, and men are welcome as well. The brunch begins at 10:00am on Saturday, May 21 in MacMurdo Hall. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for children 12 and under. We hope you plan to attend and invite a guest. Tickets will be sold on Sundays on the Patio, beginning mid-April.

Growing Up Great

*Walk with Me** joyfully presents: *Growing Up Great*, A special program about Passover for all young children, their parents and siblings. *Walk with Me* is a local Waldorf initiative promoting interfaith understanding and appreciation for young children.



- Celebrate **strength** through the life of Moses
- Celebrate **compassion** through the righteous acts of Pharaoh's daughter
- Celebrate the completion of the Jewish **Sabbath** through the Havdallah service
- Puppet Show, Crafts, Refreshments, Make friends!



Saturday, April 9, from 6:30pm until 7:45pm. Please RSVP by April 1. This is a free program which takes place at Congregation Beth Shalom, located at 4746 El Camino Avenue, Carmichael. For more information call 485-4478 or email office@cbshalom.org.

Sponsored by Congregation Beth Shalom, St. Mark's United Methodist Church and SALAM (Sacramento Area League of Associated Muslims).