

Loaves and Fishes

Episcopal Church of St. Stephen and the Incarnation
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Dear friend of Loaves and Fishes:

Abundance! That was the message of the Loaves and Fishes Thanksgiving meal. In the beginning were the turkeys, delivered frozen the week before the holiday. What is Thanksgiving without turkey, browned and succulent? So chief cook Harold “Brother” Johnson and an enthusiastic team of volunteers began preparations on Sunday before the holiday. In the days following, Brother, volunteer Julius “Crow” Crowder Jr., and others roasted 34 turkeys and wrapped them in foil—seven more than last year’s 27, Brother reported triumphantly.

The day following the birds were unwrapped and carved, ready to be heated and plated on the day itself. And the day arrived. The sides multiplied alongside the turkey slices. Succotash.

Mashed potatoes. “Big Mama” (no one seemed to know her formal name), the usual Thanksgiving gravy maker, was ailing and unable to volunteer at the stove this year, but others stepped in for her to transform the drippings into ambrosia and stir away the lumps. Meantime, pan after pan of macaroni and cheese emerged piping hot piping hot from the new convection oven. Brother’s favorite in the meal is not the turkey but the mac-and-cheese. “A heart-breaker,” he pronounced this year’s version.

Every Loaves and Fishes meal is a group production, strikingly evidenced on Thanksgiving by the 50-odd pies that closed out the feast. Those pies, some store-bought, some home-baked, were delivered one by one on Wednesday and Thursday morning, mainly by members of St. Stephen and the Incarnation Church, a key part of the L&F community of support.



Other supporters turned out to plate the meal and serve it in the dining room packed with eager guests. Some were first-time volunteers, others experienced old timers happy to guide the newcomers and help all—both guests and volunteers—feel welcome. Among the plating volunteers, a little to his surprise, was Taylor Popielarz, co-leader of a Twitter site called “Your Thoughts.” On their site Popielarz and his colleague have posted their distillations of the opinions of more than 700 people they have met and interviewed on the streets of Washington and central Indiana.

Popielarz met Denize Stanton-Williams, Loaves and Fishes’ fast-moving program manager, on the street the other day, and one thing led to another. And so, he said “Yes” to Denize’s invitation, took his place at the head of the plating line, and even found time for at least one interview while he hustled filled trays into the waiting rack.



Volunteer Taylor Popielarz



Brother, right, and Crow display the turkey roasted and wrapped.

The abundance of the day wasn’t simply in food. What is abundant at Loaves and Fishes on Thanksgiving and all the Saturdays, Sundays, and federal holidays through the year is a willingness to care for the needs of others—and to do something personally about it. I write to ask you to be part of that abundant caring. You can contribute by credit card or debit card at our website loavesandfishesdc.org or you can drop a check to Loaves and Fishes into the enclosed envelope and send it to us by mail. Your gift of \$500 will buy the groceries needed for an entire Loaves and Fishes sitting. Your gift of \$100 will cover all the costs of a hot meal served to 30 people. Your gift in any amount will help us make sure that someone, a neighbor of yours, doesn’t go hungry. And that our ability to care—and yours as well—remains abundant.

Chair, Loaves and Fishes Management Board