

STORIES OF FAITH IN ACTION



FOOD TRUCK MINISTRY ON THE MOVE

If you happen to be on the east side of St. Paul, Minn., on Thursdays during lunchtime, there's a place where you can get a fresh, healthy meal – free of charge. Enjoy a homemade meat or veggie hand pie and salad, along with a cool glass of water and a genuine sense of community. And if you feel like hanging around, there's a Bible study and prayer service.

Shobi's Table, a mobile food truck restaurant and portable ministry, reaches out to people who are confronting homelessness and other hardships. Thanks in part to a grant from the ELCA churchwide organization through Mission Support, this new food truck ministry serves about 80 people every week.

Margaret Kelly, pastor of this unique mission start in the ELCA Saint Paul Area Synod, describes it as "a ministry of, by and for folks struggling on the margins in St. Paul."

About two-thirds of the volunteers who prepare food for Shobi's Table have been homeless, and some struggle with mental illness, addictions and unemployment. "They are the evangelists," says Margaret. "I'm there for good order. They walk up and down the block and invite people for a meal."

Noah says, "The reason I became a volunteer is because I was once homeless. I do it for two reasons – to give back to those that helped me and to show those we're serving that there is a way out, if you choose it. It may not be tomorrow, it may not be next year, but things can and will change."

This ministry "just keeps opening for us, which is also very scary. We've been called into this and given the resources. It seems very big, but we're just serving a meal, saying prayers and being community together," Margaret explains.

"I'm happy that I have a shoestring budget because I get to be in relationship with some really phenomenal partners," says Margaret. "I wouldn't be able to do this without support from the ELCA, our synod and local congregations."

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