Loaves and Fishes: More than food, it’s about community

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Story and photos by Sierra Copeland

LOGAN — It’s lunch time on Saturday, and people are coming to First Presbyterian Church on Center Street. What started out as a Christmas day dinner for needy locals has become a bi-monthly celebration of camaraderie, commitment and love. That is what Loaves and Fishes is about—community.

“I come for the people, the community,” says Elizabeth Afton, a regular at the free noon meal. “There is a real feeling of family, and it is very welcoming.”

According to Wayne Crabtree, a board member of Loaves and Fishes for two years, the event started as people just wanting to do good, and do good it does. In the dining hall the smiles are warm and the friendships are strong. It smells strongly of chicken and rice, since that’s on today’s menu. The room is bright with sunlight, and piano music fills the hall. One man sits at a table, laughing with his wife as he feeds her a spoonful of rice, because she is too shaky to feed herself. Children wearing name tags flitter around the room, smiling with accomplishment, excited to help the community in a way that brings happiness.

“I love this so much,” Crabtree says, smiling at the guests sitting with him at the table. “We consider it our way of ensuring that people will not be lost.”

Crabtree sits at a table that he calls a table full of “regulars.” Joining him are Afton, Patrick Phillips, Devon Updike, and Michael Jarrett. Loaves and Fishes has brought them together.

“You really meet some good people here,” Phillips says.

Crabtree says that the food is very secondary here. “Yes, that’s why the people come, but then they realize that what you get out of it is a lot more than food.”

A family of volunteers stands behind the dessert table, a woman with her two daughters. It is Jenny Lynn Little’s first time volunteering, but she plans on coming back. Her young daughter tells her mom that she wants to volunteer with all of her friends at her next birthday party.

The guests and volunteers seem to have a symbiotic relationship. It’s friendship, and no one is leaving without a smile on their face.

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