



Above and below, Rev. Peter Bunder holds service for the parishioners from the Chapel of the Good Shepherd on Sunday at Food Finders Food Bank. Parishioners volunteered their time before services to help pack and label food for the food bank. MICHAEL HEINZ/JOURNAL & COURIER

# Faith at work

West Lafayette church combines worship and volunteering

By Taya Flores  
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Surrounded by tall racks lined with canned goods and boxed foods, Dee Tritschler received Holy Communion Sunday. It's a normal rite that she observes every week, typically at her church in West Lafayette, but this past Sunday, she worshipped in a warehouse after volunteering with fellow parishioners.

"It was very meaningful — the fact that we go into the world to help in whatever ways," said Tritschler, 81, of West Lafayette.

Tritschler was among about 55 members of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd Episcopal church to participate in a "workshop" service Sunday. The service combines volunteering with worship as believers serve in Food Finders Food Bank before holding the communion service.

"It's volunteering as an act of worship," said Rev. Peter Bunder, chaplain for the church, which is a Purdue University campus ministry. "For the Episcopal Church, all there is (is) worship."

Although the Chapel of the Good Shepherd has been holding workshop services for about two years, the food bank is looking for more churches to get involved, said Katy Bunder, Peter Bunder's wife and executive director of the food bank.

## WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

Interested in hosting a workshop of your own? Contact Amy Gaulke of Food Finders Food Bank at 765-471-0062. Groups need to be between 30 and 50 people.

## ONLINE

See a photo gallery from the "workshop" service at [jconline.com](http://jconline.com).







Parishioners from the Chapel of the Good Shepherd pack and label food for Food Finders Food Bank Sunday at the food bank in Lafayette. MICHAEL HEINZ/JOURNAL & COURIER

## WORK

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The volunteers spent their time repackaging bulk packages of maniocotti into smaller bags that can easily be distributed to families in need. They also placed labels on canned goods.

"When we have a product that needs to be repackaged, it's helpful for us to have a large number of volunteers to do it all at once, to get the food out of the freezer and into the hands of the people who need it," she said.

Peter Bunder said the church is socially progressive when it comes to poverty. Instead of taking an Old Testament approach to scripture, which primarily teaches that the sick or poor have sinned, they look at poverty through a New Testament lens.

"In the New Testament, Jesus addresses the issue," he said. "The poor are the special possession of God, and the sign of the coming of the kingdom is you took care of the people who (depend) on nothing but God."

Katy Bunder said the church focuses on social justice. "People being hungry in this country seems really unjust," she said. "When we do something like this to feed the hungry, you feel like you are really making a difference in the community."

Gavin Pugh, a fifth-year senior at Purdue University, said the experience fosters a greater sense of community.

"It's nice to see a bunch of people take time out of their day to do some labor for people they may never meet," said the 22-year-old. "I felt connected to the people both in my church and in a grander sense to the people in the Lafayette (and) West Lafayette community."

Courtenay Wells, of West Lafayette, said it simply puts "God's word into action."

"Jesus didn't just preach, he actually acted," said the 41-year-old. "He did what he could to help. It's very easy to be a Christian (who) says you are accepting and loving and serves other people, but it's another thing to actually go out and do it."

## SPIRIT

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color.

As quickly as I told them I was the chaplain, they asked, "Do you have our mother?"

I nodded.

"Can we see her?" they pressed.

I ushered them into a small family room where the doctor soon joined us. The sons peppered our ER doc with questions, but they didn't have to wait for answers; they could read the answers in his eyes.

Tears welled. Their noses reddened. The doctor confirmed their worst fears with a nod and a dismissive sentence. Their mother was dead.

When the sons turned to me and asked if they could see their mother, I brought them to the trauma room, where she lay under a sheet. A nurse gently pulled the sheet back to reveal the mother's face. I glanced at the battle-hardened ER nurse where I could see her eyes, which betrayed her emotional involvement.

The sons focused their tearing eyes upon their mom. Gone was the protective watch of their mother's eyes — replaced by an unrecognizable vacant stare.

Disbelief erupted from their eyes, hearts and vocal chords. Just then, a security guard appeared at the door. These days, any emotional gathering is sub-

I left the ED that day with a new appreciation that grief is the great equalizer between skin color, culture and religion.

ject to suspicion. The guard locked eyes with me, giving a protective expression intended to query my need for help. I nodded negatively.

The guard left but quickly returned escorting sad-eyed sisters and daughters. They exchanged knowing glances with their brothers, and soon the women gathered around their mother's body, caressing every part of it. They held her mouth as if to hush its pain, brushed her hair as if adjusting her crown, but most frequently, they stroked her eyelids as if to redirect her glance to another world.

The room was inconceivable, bulging with a cacophony of a foreign dialect tangled with heartache. Soon, howev-

er, like an outgoing the tears receded. I became about funeral homes. Acceptance gained a brief toehold that was evident in their logical eyes.

I left the ED that with a new appreciation that grief is the great equalizer between skin color, culture and religion. And while it may be very difficult to understand the political complexities of places like Syria and Iran, should be able to understand the universal and horrendous sense of losing a loved one.

If we can see that grief, I think we can get closer to seeing the world through the grieved eyes of God.

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