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Food for all

FLC Midweek Meal provides meals in the face of economic uncertainty

Blair Rotary Club members prepare sandwiches for the First Lutheran Church Midweek Meal.
GREG FORBES



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By Greg Forbes - editor@enterprise.pub.com

As inflation puts a squeeze family budgets throughout the country, more are utilizing services to help put food on the table.

First Lutheran Church's Midweek Meal program is one service that aims to make sure no one in the community goes hungry for at least one night. Every Wednesday, anyone is welcome to dine-in, pick up or have a free meal delivered.

Erika Cada, Director of Children's and Youth Ministries at FLC, said the program began in March 2020 to provide meals and ease at least some of the anxiety brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Averaging about 220 meals served per week, Cada said the program has continued to help families and individuals as economic concerns grow each day.

"I think our numbers are going to start to rise now. I don't think the impact of the economy has totally hit people yet," she said. "I think the next few months are going to be telling for us."

Cada said the program operates on donations and grants. Each week costs about \$500, she said. Also because of the economy, Cada said donations have gone down but what she's seen is an increase in grant availability. Recently, the Blair Rotary Club received a Rotary District 5660 Grant to put towards the meals. Members from the Rotary Club also helped pack, serve and deliver meals throughout October.

Rotarian Bob Schmoll said the chance to help with the program personifies Rotary's mission of "Service over Self."

"This matching District Grant project has enabled club members to fulfill that motto and it has been a rewarding experience for them," he said. "We were delighted to partner with First Lutheran Church to provide these meals to local residents and commend the volunteer group that continues to provide this service to our community."

Cada said the contributions of time and talent from Rotary, as well as all donors and volunteers, are what makes the program possible.

"The fact that most of the people who receive the meals are not able to make donations makes those grants from the community even more impactful for us," she said.

Cada said the program will continue as long as it can because of the existing and growing needs of the community. Of the 220 served each week, Cada said most are either food insecure and don't have regular access to meals or are elderly. However, Cada said the service is open to anyone and wants to be clear that no one should hesitate to receive a meal.

"There's no questions asked about this program," she said. "It's just feeding people."

To receive a meal, donate or volunteer, contact Cada at 402-533-0918 or email at ecada@firstlutheranblair.org.

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