

THE FOOD PANTRY MINISTRY. . .

Responding to a growing need in our community, The Food Pantry ministry was started by Buck Levin . He donated a little wooden red wagon and placed it in our Narthex. Church members and guests were invited to bring can goods and place them in the wagon as they arrive for services. Each Sunday, as the offering and oblations are brought forward to our Priest, the little red wagon and its contents are pulled down the aisle to be blessed before they are stored in our pantry.

At the moment a 5' x 5' closet with 6 shelves serves as our food pantry. The food pantry is open one day a month. On that day we are greeted by a long line of families needing a little extra. We typically serve 35-40 needy people a month. We pre pack bags of food providing proteins and vegetables as well as the occasional sweet. We also distribute hygiene product such as soap, tooth brushes, tooth paste and deodorant. Volunteers from our church family work the pantry. As word of our red wagon ministry got out in the community, we began to receive food items from different organizations. The Cordele Lions Club donates half of the food from the food drive they sponsor on the opening night of the Central GA Fair, with the other half going to the "concerned Citizens that care". In 2011 we received over 400 pounds of canned goods from the Cordele Lions Club...spilling out of our tiny pantry into our fellowship hall. We also receive food from The Gateway Center food drives. When the news that our pantry is being depleted, The Gateway Center often sponsors canned food drives with other community organizations. This typically restocks our shelves for a month or two.

Our goals for the next 5 years are to design a larger food pantry "area" so we can receive grants from Feed America. We are in the process of filling out the applications and making sure we can pass their inspections. Currently we know we will not qualify because our pantry space is simply too small. Securing the "space" is an obstacle due to our limited square footage in Holmes Hall. If we receive grants from the "FEED AMERICA" program, they would stock our food pantry and restock it as needed. With their added support, our goal is to have the food pantry open twice a month and never have to turn anybody away again.

