

Mission serves meals to needy on Good Friday

Saturday, March 22, 2008

By Steve Twedt, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette



John Heller/Post-Gazette

Macella Holmes, center, of the North Side, takes part in a Good Friday worship service — Chalice Music Ministry — at the Light of Life Rescue Mission on East North Avenue on the North Side.

There haven't been too many good days lately for Clyde Hollis.

But yesterday was a very Good Friday for the 53-year-old North Side man. Mr. Hollis, who is on disability and doesn't have a permanent address, was among the 200 or so people who enjoyed a hot meal at the Light of Life Rescue Mission on North Avenue as part of the mission's outreach program for the poor.

"I'm having a real rough time," he said, "but this is one place where everybody can come."

The Good Friday dinners have become a tradition at Light of Life, which also opens its doors and pantry for the poor on Thanksgiving and Christmas. In addition, volunteers delivered 425 hot meals to local senior high-rise residents yesterday morning.

"We consider this an entry point to find out what their needs are and to channel people to long-term care," said Beth Healey, public relations manager for the mission.

Bill Rhoades, who heads up volunteer services for Light of Life, said about 40 volunteers helped with the dinner meal from 3 to 6 p.m., about half of them from US Airways' Do Crew, a group that includes mechanics, pilots, flight attendants, machinists, baggage handlers, customer service representatives and others from the airline.

"It really puts a perspective on life," said Carol Biresm of West Mifflin, the Pittsburgh-based sales manager for US Airways. "When you see what the Light of Life does for its clients, it's such an inspiration."

The meals included a choice of ham or scrod, with hot vegetables, potatoes, rolls and pie. While the majority of guests were men, there also were families with small children.

"Some people have a job but can't afford a home, or they can't afford to buy enough food," said Ms. Healey.

Steve Twedt can be reached at stwedt@post-gazette.com or 412-263-1963.

First published on March 22, 2008 at 12:00 am