

500 Men Breakfast to feature Tim Ezell, Jay LaPlant on Saturday at Jersey Fairgrounds

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
August 3 2018 1:25 PM



JERSEYVILLE - The annual 500 Men Breakfast is always a special occasion at the Jersey County Fairgrounds and this year's event is set for 8:30 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 4.

Tim Ezell from The Thread will be the guest speaker. Another special presenter will be Dow's Jay LaPlant, who will give the opening prayer.

Breakfast will be provided by Burger King. No reservations are needed, so anyone wishing to attend can just show up for the free food and fellowship.

Ezell is most known as a former television personality for Fox News in St. Louis. The Thread is an organization Ezell says is dedicated to shining a bright light on the bright lights of St. Louis, beginning with people and creating and/or mobilizing people to engage in service, revitalization and charitable opportunities within St. Louis. Ezell works with his partner, Virginia Kerr, with Thread. Ezell is also a pastor at The Journey Church in St. Louis.

The 500 Men Breakfast is a labor of love for its founder and organizer Steve Pegram. Pegram is one of the most well-known



Santas in the region, which is part of his mission work.

Pegram said the breakfast name and its purpose comes from a variation of the Biblical theme of Jesus feeding 5,000 in Matthew 14:13-21. In that reference, when Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

"We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered. "Bring them here to me," he said in the quotation. "Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children."

Pegram explained exactly why he decided to start the 500 Men Breakfast and his other work for the hungry: "I looked out our window, and we've got a drive way that's like a quarter-mile long, and I'm going great here's another bill collector," Pegram said. "But it was a guy from Dow Baptist Church, and he said I got something you. And he just started carrying food. Boxes of food."

"What I can relate to as a Santa, is that you don't have to wear a red suit to make a difference," he said. "Jesus is the way for sure. I try to give back with the 500 Men Breakfast; it is a special event for me and the others. Thirty years ago I looked in the mirror and was drunk and God helped me. I haven't drank since then and also went to A. A. (Alcoholic Anonymous). Since that time, I have also tried to give back."

Jay LaPlant of Dow is someone Pegram met along the way in his journey and the two have become close friends.

Jay said: "I love showing love and kindness to others and I will gladly help out Saturday. What I enjoy the most is reading the Bible and sharing God's word with other people."