

River of Life hosts annual Thanksgiving dinner

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Each year a few days before Thanksgiving, Marilyn Pruitt and several River of Life Family Church volunteers in Alton host a dinner open to everyone in the community.

This year's dinner is set to begin at 3 p.m. today and as normal, Pruitt and the other volunteers hope for an excellent outpouring of people from the community. The dinner today marks the 14th time River of Life has hosted the event. The dinner is open to the public and is free. The church is located at 3401 Fosterburg Road in Alton.

“We are here to serve people and I am amazed how many people have felt there is more here than just serving the food,” Pruitt said. “They realize the importance of bonding with the people. That is the part I enjoy so much is knowing this is happening. Feeding people is wonderful, but it is also about showing people we love them and we are there for them.”



Pruitt said many come through the auditorium and sanctuary of the church and a lot of those attending ask for a prayer.

“We try to take time to pray with them or do anything to help them,” Pruitt said.

It makes Pruitt so despondent when she sees people walk by people who downtrodden or having a difficult time and act as if they don't care.

“I don't have a choice; I have to go back,” she said. “I know that I am not supposed to walk away from them. It is not just about feeding people. It is much more than that.”

The River of Life Thanksgiving dinner started after Sept. 11, 2001, World Trade Center destruction and devastation in New York City. One of the main purposes in the beginning was to calm people's fears, Pruitt said.



Last year, 1,420 people were fed during the event. Pruitt said she was thankful to all the businesses and individuals who contributed to make sure the dinner was held year after year.

She said anyone who still wished to contribute or needed information about the dinner could contact her at 618-567-0178.

The dinner will be served from 3 to 8 p.m. today at the church.