Loaves and Fishes

In 1968, St. Stephen's Church members noticed that people were drifting in from the street to join the church coffee hour. It was obvious that doughnuts and coffee alone were not going to be enough to fill our guests' needs. Parishioners led by the late Margaret Keys (at left) began to volunteer to prepare a hot meal and serve it in the dining room. Margaret said that those who work in the kitchen are as much at worship as those upstairs in the church, and when communion is ministered, it should be taken from the altar to those downstairs — a practice we continue today. (Margaret's ashes are interred in our Memorial Garden—the church yard.)

For the first few decades, L&F was staffed in a very ad hoc way, mostly by volunteers. In the last decade the program has become more organized but still depends on volunteers. Currently, hundreds of people volunteer each year—from dozens of congregations and organizations—to prepare and serve meals.

Today, Loaves and Fishes serves 25,000 meals a year.

"We have a Eucharist every Sunday and what happens there is directly connected to what happens in the dining room where all are fed. We don't eat while those around us are hungry."

-The Rev. Carol Cramley, Washington Diocese Newspaper, April 1975