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Packages en route to Iraq, Kuwait

Christ Our King Lutheran Church responds to chaplain's sermon

Saturday, April 14, 2007
BY MEGAN BROWN
 News Staff Reporter

Since February, a Saline church has collected everything from Cheetos to shaving cream, filling about 125 shoe boxes with snack food, 150 toiletry sets and boxes of assorted supplies to send to servicemen and women overseas.

On Thursday, volunteers at the Christ Our King Lutheran Church packed those items into about 31 larger boxes and shipped them off to two chaplains - one in Kuwait, the other in Iraq.

Sandy Swisher, church treasurer and missions coordinator, said she chose military personnel, both active and veteran, as the mission focus for the first quarter of the year.

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"It was on my heart," Swisher said. "It became a blessing with a lot of people involved."

The church, which draws about 340 worshippers on Sundays, last month heard a sermon by the Rev. Oliver Washington, a chaplain who served in Iraq from June 2004 to November 2005.

While in Iraq, Washington put in requests for items through the Web site

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anysoldier.com, he said. The site helps people who want to send letters and packages to military personnel by providing contacts in overseas units, who list items they would like, and directions on how to send the packages.

"It's nice to get a care package, and the contents lift our spirits," said Washington, who is campus chaplain at Concordia University in Ann Arbor.

Swisher found information about how to ship packages to the Armed Forces using the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Web site.

Christ Our King's pastor, Tom Schroeder, called the collection "faith in action."

"It's a privilege for me to be able to serve a congregation that follows the example of Jesus," he said.

Three or four members of the church are serving overseas, Schroeder said.

Contact Megan Brown at 734-994-6852 or mbrown@annarbornews.com.

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