

TWENTY-FOUR HOUR EVENT

One day to end hunger

Event brings people together in prayer to stamp out hunger

By Nick Tabor
For the Citizen Patriot

Participants in the End Hunger organization's 24-hour prayer vigil filtered into Immanuel Lutheran Church on Friday afternoon, still warming their hands from the cold.

They'd planned to hold the vigil around a cross in the church's front yard at W. Michigan Avenue and Brown Street, but the weather altered their plans.

"It's just too cold to do it outside with wisdom," said Dennis Beach, a member of Redeemer Lutheran Church and coordinator of the event, which started at 3 p.m. Friday and will end at 3 p.m. today.

Representatives of eight churches are attending to pray in one-hour increments for Jackson residents who don't get enough to eat.

"We're looking for the Lord to change hunger in Jackson," Beach said. "(And) we want to raise the awareness of the people in Jackson."

The Food Bank Council estimated last year that 18 per-

cent of Jackson County's residents did not have enough to eat, said Janet Jaeger, a director of Immanuel's food pantry.

She said End Hunger consists of 12 local churches' food pantries. Eight of those churches are participating in the vigil, each sending as many volunteers as possible.

Jaeger said she expected 50 to 75 participants by the end.

She said the organization also asked its members to fast in preparation for the vigil. They'll end with a soup meal this afternoon.

"We're leaving it up to each individual about fasting and how they want to do it," she said.

Connie Young, who helps with Immanuel's food bank, came to pray for an hour on Friday.

"They've reached out into the community and touched a lot of people," she said of End Hunger. "Jesus always met the people where they were at, their needs. And hunger is a very deep need. I think (the vigil) is deeply rooted in what our Christ would do for us."



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Dennis Beach, left, lights candles as he and Karen Balcom begin their part of the 24-hour prayer vigil to raise awareness of hunger in the Jackson community.