

Saron Lutheran Church's Little Free Pantry is one of the only opportunities for food assistance in the Strasburg area.

In a small country town of Strasburg, Colorado, it was learned that the food pantry had closed and then that the nearby Town of Bennett's food pantry also closed. It was time. Time to find a way our small church, Saron Lutheran, in Strasburg, could meet some of the needs of neighbors for food. The call to action found its solution in building and maintaining a Little Free Pantry. Jackie Lanning got approval from the church Council and her family got busy. Don, Jackie's husband, found design ideas on www.littlefreepantry.org and designed and built one. Their daughter and her two boys, then 5- and 7-years old painted it. Their son spent hours digging the post holes. (If you know the soil around Strasburg, you would understand why 'hours' were needed.)

Jackie shares, "her faith in Christ is rooted in reading about how Christ showed us how to love" adding, "Jesus told us in so many ways to look at everyone with love. With the hungry, we are to feed them as He did many times. I see my effort with the Pantry is but a response to God's love through Christ."

Saron's Little Free Pantry has been open for nearly three years now, offering shelf-stable foods and hygiene items. For several months the pantry only needed refilling every three or four days. With increased costs impacting family budgets, it is now nearly empty every day – always needing more cereal, shelf-stable milk, fruit cups, tuna, peanut butter, and canned or packaged meals.

Donations from our members are amazing, but thank God, our community also continues to step up and help. Saron Lutheran has received donations from Strasburg Presbyterian, Byers Community Church, and Our Lady of the Plains Catholic Church. Neighbors also often simply stop by and put items in the pantry, living out the request printed on the pantry to "Take what you need. Leave what you can." One summer a truckload of donations was received when the Arapahoe County Council on Aging and Adams County Agewise Group met in Byers bringing donations. Designating "Saron Lutheran" on a King Soopers' card as one's community partner provides a quarterly check used to purchase items in bulk. Thrivent Financial has often donated \$250 through their Community Action Program.

Jackie Lanning adds, "It is my hope that more people will join us in responding to Jesus' call to feed the hungry. Support the food program in your community. If none is available, a good start is to build a food pantry in your neighborhood."

