

Free day of feasts - Deliverance Temple works to spread holiday cheer; feed the community

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON – Jason Harrison, a minister at Deliverance Temple in Alton and a notably fine cooker and smoker, is working to spread holiday cheer across Alton this Wednesday through his church and community volunteers.

He had smoked 10 entire turkeys Monday, planned another 18 Monday night and had 30 set to go for Tuesday. The dozens of birds are being prepared for a day of Thanksgiving feasts across the city. Harrison said two of the three programs started three years ago, and the third is an organic coupling of his mission to feed Altonians and Shenekia Stovall's mission to do the same. Harrison said he wanted to “help spread holiday cheer” as far and wide as he could while encouraging others to do the same.

Harrison's Wednesday mission will begin at noon with a holiday luncheon for the prisoners interred at the Alton Police Department.

“These are people who are often forgotten about or left out, and it's the holidays, man, everyone deserves a good meal,” Harrison said. “And I don't know about you, but I definitely feel the holiday cheer after a good meal. People can be hard on them and cold and say they're in there for a reason and don't deserve it, but they're human and it's the holidays.”

Following sharing a meal with those locked in jail, Harrison's own church will be hosting a meal for everyone at 2 p.m. Deliverance Temple is located at 1125 E. Sixth Street in Alton. Harrison said anyone is welcome to attend for a free Thanksgiving meal with all of the trim.

“We are calling Salvation Army, the Oasis Women's Center and sending word through our pastors to let anyone know who may be in need of a meal or some people to talk to this holiday season,” he said. “We'd also like it if some people who are not so much in need could come by and enjoy a meal with us and mingle.”

After that large meal with the community, Harrison's day of service will continue. He will be giving away smoked turkeys to people across the community who find themselves in need. Harrison has been donating smoked turkeys to people in need across the community for years, but this year he is being joined by Stovall, who has been doing the same thing with sides.

“She had been delivering sides to people across the community, and I had been giving away turkeys,” Harrison said. “So I called her and said 'let's partner up together, you do the sides, and I'll do the turkeys.’”

Unlike previous years, Harrison said the food will be delivered to people. In the past, he operated under a sort of “first come, first served” platform. This year, however, he has a list of people to whom he is distributing meals the night before Thanksgiving.