

## THE COOKS' TOUR TRADITION

Cooks' Tour had its beginnings in 1970, when Ruth Blomeyer as elder for "Parish Life" expressed concern on "how to involve new members in activities of the congregation." Joan Herman, also an elder at the time, expressed her goal to have a youth art and craft exhibit. Ruth brought the idea of a Cooks' Tour with her from her hometown of Peoria, Illinois, and these ladies, along with Nancy Denny and all who heard the call proposed the project with the express purposes of: Bringing new members into fellowship with existing members through arts and crafts and raising funds to encourage education on our neighboring Indian reservations. And so it all began. This first event raised over \$3,000, and after expenses were paid, donated \$1,500 to the Indian Aid Fund of the Synod and put aside seed money for the next year's event.

Fellowship, crafts and mission. Originally, Cooks' Tour consisted of a home tour of 5 homes, where only the entertainment areas such as the kitchen and dining areas were open to the public. The tables were decorated according to themes, which included not only the holiday tables for Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years, but also themes such as luncheon for the "girls," after theater party, and bridal shower. A member-florist donated the centerpieces matching the themes. On each table was a menu card, and the recipes were sold back at the Church, where refreshments were served and boutique items were sold

As Cooks' Tour evolved, the homes opened more rooms and became showplaces. Car pools and parking problems improved with the addition of trolleys and busses. The art gallery was added to display a variety of artists' original art. The crafters expanded the boutique with their time and talents to produce a variety of marketable crafts. New ideas were put into place, with a separate Grandma's Pantry, White Elephant Sale, Silent Auction, Sanctuary Tours, the Hold Desk, Tiffany West, a Publicity Department, the hospitality shown at the Tea Table, the Garden Shop, and the Luncheon, which progressed from selling homemade sandwiches to the workers, to making lunches for the guests by a kitchen-load of volunteers, to being catered by Arcadia Farms.

The Cooks' Tour event is sponsored by and under the governance of Presbyterian Women according to its by-laws. It is the longest running activity at Valley Presbyterian Church and has become part of the Church's heritage.

It could never have begun or have been so successful over the years, without the support of the:

- ◆ Church staff
- ◆ beautiful campus facilities
- ◆ congregation of men and women volunteers
- ◆ underlying focus of fellowship, fun, and raising needed funds for mission, both within and outside of the Presbyterian community,
- ◆ community involvement
- ◆ and YOU -- its leaders.

**Welcome to the tradition of Cooks' Tour.**